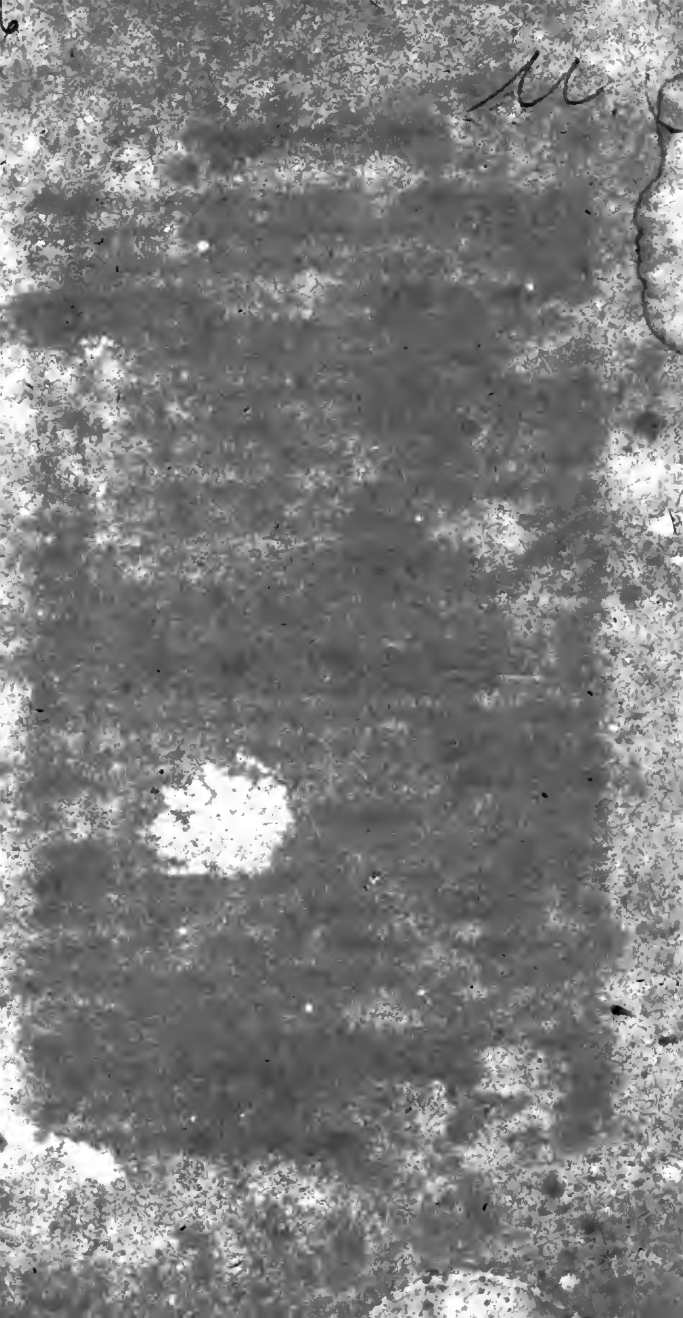


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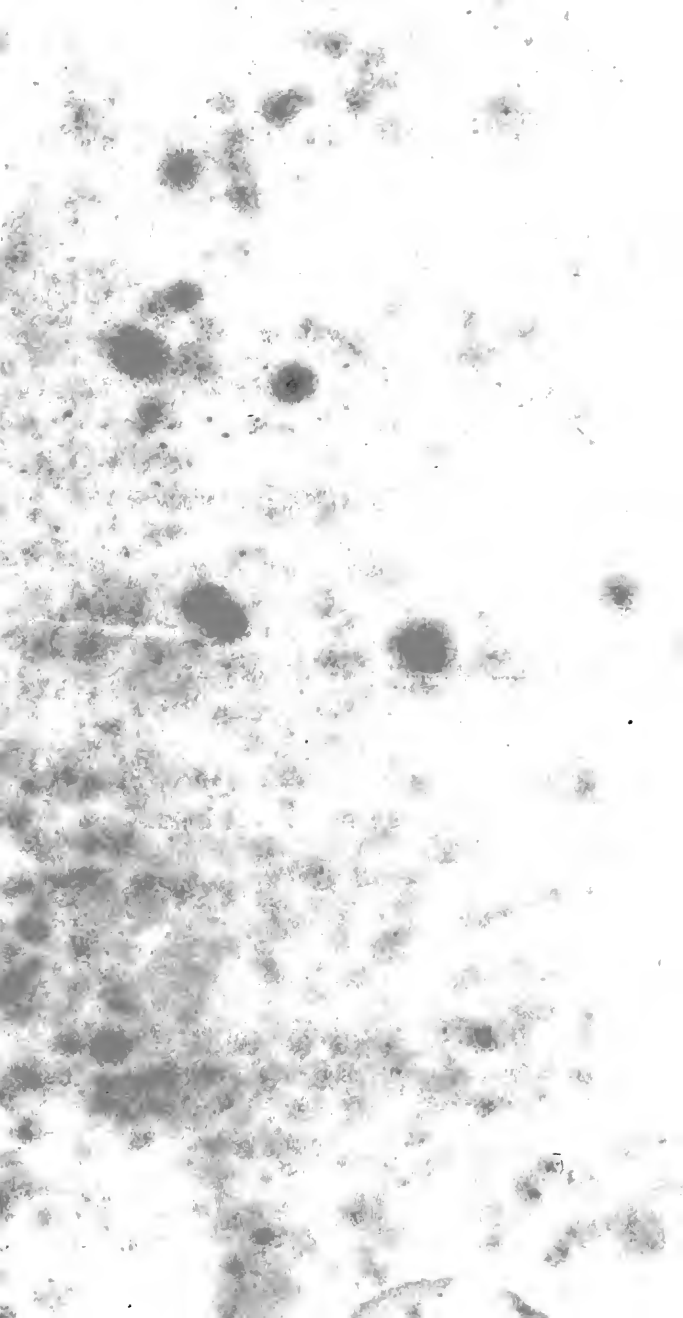


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# AMERICAN EDUCATION:

OR

STRICTURES

ON THE

NATURE, NECESSITY, & PRACTICABILITY

OF

*A System of National Education,*

SUITED TO THE UNITED STATES.

BY REV. BENJAMIN O. PEERS.

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY LETTER BY

FRANCIS L. HAWKS, D.D.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY JOHN S. TAYLOR,

THEOLOGICAL AND SUNDAY-SCHOOL BOOKSELLER, BRICK CHURCH  
CHAPEL, CORNER PARK-ROW AND SPRUCE-STREET.

1838.

Entered according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1838, by  
BENJAMIN O. PEERS,  
in the Clerk's office of the District Court of the United States, for the  
Southern District of New-York.

G. F. HOPKINS, Printer, 2 Arn-street.

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## INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

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TO THE REV. B. O. PEERS.

REV. AND DEAR SIR:

IT affords me much pleasure to know that you are about to publish your work on education, the substance of which you did me the honour to submit to me in manuscript, two or three years ago. The work, I am persuaded, will need no recommendation to the thoughtful reader beyond the matter it contains. As, however, some friends of the great cause you advocate have requested an introduction from my pen, my deep interest in the subject will not allow me to refuse my humble aid in its support. Were you as extensively and favourably known here as you are in the field of your past labours, you would need no introduction. Devoted for many years to the work of instruction, bringing to it the enthusiasm of a mind deeply impressed with its importance, and eminently successful in your past efforts, I think you have acquired a right to speak upon a subject to which you have devoted so much thought and observation.

I would fain avoid, too, the arrogance of seeming to suppose that any introduction from me can give, as it were, an *imprimatur* to your book. If, however, my favourable opinion will have the effect of inducing any one to peruse the volume, I should be sorry to withhold the benefit of that opinion. I desire that the book may be read ; for though in some minor matters we might perhaps differ in opinion, yet substantially I know we agree ; and any discussion of the important subject of which you here treat must do good, for it is a topic on which, as I think, we have yet a great deal to learn in this country. There is not on the face of the globe a land in which it is more essential that education should be generally diffused, and of the right character, than in our own. Under God, the preservation of our political institutions depends upon the proper education of our countrymen. The subject, (though it is beginning to occupy the thoughts of many good and wise men of the land,) is yet very far from receiving the attention to which its importance justly entitles it ; and opinions are unfortunately prevalent, the tendency of which is, to present obstacles to the cause of sound education.

In the first place, the office of an instructor of youth is not respected as it should be. We need good teachers ; but under the present state of public opinion are we likely to procure them ? There are hundreds of men in our country pos-

sessing the peculiar qualifications required for this employment ; and occasionally the enthusiasm and practical philanthropy, nay, I may add, the patriotism of one of these prompts him to devote *his life* to the work, despite all discouragements. But much the larger number of those fitted for the task, prefer to follow a business having more of the world's respect than is met with in the calling of a teacher of youth. An educated young man, seeking means to prepare himself for some one of the professions usually termed "learned," may indeed resort to school-keeping to increase his scanty means of support ; but he enters upon it as a task to which necessity alone has forced him ; he carries into it none of the zeal that stimulates to vigorous effort ; there is no treasured observation from which to deduce practical rules in the delicate and difficult task of disciplining mind ; no efforts are made to introduce improvements ; and at the earliest possible period, the unwilling teacher gladly delivers himself from what he often deems the disgrace of being a pedagogue, and entering on his professional career, feels that he has taken a step upward in society. Now there is no disgrace in being a teacher of the young ; the ancients very wisely deemed it one of the most honourable of all callings ; and it is so, if it be estimated as it should be, by its importance to the well-being of society. Let it then be considered as one of the *learned professions* ; let com-

petent men be encouraged to give to it the labour of a *life*; remove the temptation to undertake it as a mere temporary expedient, and abandon it at the earliest opportunity; and the best abilities of the country will soon be found engaged in the work. The professors in our colleges are indeed on a par with the other professions, and this is right; but why are not all the teachers in the land so? The common people, though often uneducated themselves, yet feel that they are entitled to look down on the teachers of our common schools as an humbler class than that to which they belong: and what is the cause of this? Obviously this:—incompetent men often obtain situations as instructors, because competent ones will not take them: the people feel but little respect for such teachers, and thus the evil is perpetuated, because a man of ability knows he must encounter a prejudice against his calling, founded on the known incapacity of his fellow-labourers in the work. The remedy for this is simply to *elevate* the office of a teacher in public opinion; to invite the best talents to engage in it, and to afford adequate remuneration for exertion. This would bring forward, as it has done into our higher seminaries of learning, many competent men. Let there be an *educational department of the government*, and let its details be managed by proper officers, accountable to the representatives of the people. In many of the States, funds have been



wisely provided to make, as far as possible, education a common blessing. It is a sound republican principle to provide funds and to watch over this subject with sleepless vigilance ; but how much is it neglected in most of the States ! It is lamentable to see the sad waste of pecuniary means involved in this matter of so much public interest. The waste consists in appropriating the money to the payment of agents who do not, because they *cannot*, render back to the country an equivalent in the *proper* education of our youth. They are not unfaithful, but they are too often incompetent. I am verily persuaded that in the State of New-York for instance, if our common schools were all brought under a system, subjecting them in every particular to the supervision of one competent man, who, as a recognised officer of the government in that department, was paid for his services and held to a strict responsibility, we might, with our present expenditure, accomplish more than double our present results. There are, as you know, rich lessons of wisdom on this subject that we might gather from some of the monarchies of Europe. I have not here time to go into all the details of the plan that has suggested itself to my mind, nor is it necessary. The difficulty is that the government has but half done its work: it has provided funds, but it has not provided an efficient system to disburse them to the best advantage. One essential defect I cannot, however, here pass by.

We want a normal school *for the training of teachers*. Every man is not fit to teach the young, even though he may be educated, and not destitute of talents. In the German Universities, this training of teachers is as regular a department of instruction as any other. In such a school as I have named, there will be found in the hands of a skilful professor, a concentration of all the wisdom and all the light that experience and observation, carefully gathered from all quarters, have shed upon the subject. Now if the experience and observation of our predecessors on other subjects, are valuable, they are emphatically so on the great question of the best mode of forming morals, and developing mind. But on this head a volume might be written instead of a letter.

In the second place, an obstacle as I think to the proper education of our youth is, that we do not sufficiently bear in mind that we are to educate them as *American* youth. We take European plans and systems of instruction in the gross, instead of merely taking from them that which may be useful under our peculiar institutions. It is true that the ancient languages and the sciences are the same, whether taught in Europe or America; a Greek verb is a Greek verb all the world over, and the multiplication table is true on either side of the Atlantic; and yet there may be a wide difference in the scope and bearing of a European and an American teacher's *remarks*, even on the

Greek grammar, or on arithmetic. But what I more particularly mean here is, that a great deal should be taught to our children that can be found in no European system, because it has no application to the condition or future duties of a European child. The very book, therefore, which might serve well enough for an English boy, may not be the best for an American. The instruction of our children ought to be such as accommodates itself to the peculiarities of a republic, not of a monarchy. A great deal here must depend on the judgement and good sense of the teacher who, by his observations is imperceptibly to imbue his pupil with feelings such as become his situation — to teach him to feel that as a member of a republic he has peculiar responsibilities for which he should fit himself; and in short, in a thousand ways to prevent the lad from ever forming habits of thought or predilections derived from a more familiar acquaintance with English than with American institutions. I hardly need say that I do not mean the boy should be made a fool by being taught to despise and decry all that is not American. Let whatever is excellent in the institutions of all lands be shown him — let him, however, perfectly understand the peculiarities of his own country. You perceive I write as if I supposed education to consist of something more than merely assigning to a child a lesson in the printed book, and requiring of him to repeat it *memoriter*. I would

rather teach a child without book at all, than teach him nothing more than such an exercise of memory.

There is one other point on which I would say a word. The education of this country is, I fear, addressed too exclusively to the *head*. We have not begun yet to make it a part of the business to educate the *heart*. We provide for the man physical, and for the man intellectual ; but not for the man moral. This is wrong. Religion no more comes by instinct than reading and writing do ; and we must teach religion or abandon the only efficient agent in training the moral man. I have alluded however to this subject, because I could not in duty do less. There is but little need of my enlarging on it to you, for its discussion forms a prominent part, nay, the staple of your excellent book.

I feel that I have troubled you long enough with my thoughts, thus hastily thrown together, on a subject to which you have devoted your life ; and, as some atonement for my trespass on your time, I will only say, that if this letter will serve instead of an introduction, you are at liberty to use it for that purpose.

Very respectfully your friend,

FRANCIS L. HAWKS.

ST. THOMAS' PARSONAGE, {  
SEPTEMBER 1, 1838. }

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION.

I HOLD it to be self-evident, that an infant has a right to the growth of its mind, no less than of its body: in other words, that every human being is entitled to an education.

THIS WE OUGHT TO RANK AMONG THE NATURAL AND UNALIENABLE RIGHTS OF MAN.

We are forced to this conclusion, whether we reason from the claims of the individual, or from the obligations of parents and of society, or from the will of God as indicated by his providence and by his word.

An infant has no agency or choice in bringing itself into the world; and on its entrance into life it is perfectly helpless: it has therefore a claim on others for protection. It is altogether incapable of taking care of itself; hence arises a claim to comfortable food and clothing. It is expected, in time, to perform certain duties to the family, to society, and to God, which it cannot discharge

without an appropriate developement of its physical, intellectual, and moral nature ; and on this is founded its claim to education.

Perfectly commensurate with these claims of children, are the obligations of parents and of society at large.

No man has a right to marry, unless he have a prospect of being able to afford the leisure, and to provide the means requisite for the education of his offspring.

To a human being who, as a helpless animal, is unprovided with nourishment and shelter ; or as an intellectual and moral being, has his education slighted ; or as an immortal being, is unprepared for the glorious destiny to which Christianity invites him, existence is in the highest degree a curse ; a curse which no one is at liberty to inflict, especially on an innocent, unconscious, unresisting victim.

A parent expects, that at maturity, his children will relieve him of their maintenance, and in turn contribute to his comfort ; it is his solemn duty, then, to fit them for this state of independence, and to make them capable of rendering this service.

Society too demands of every one who is not providentially hindered, that he support himself, and conduct with justice, order, and benevolence, in all his social relations ; it is consequently bound to see that he is prepared to do so. A very delicate question in casuistry might here be started,



viz: how far should the circumstance of involuntary miseducation palliate the conduct of criminals in the estimation of our courts of justice? At present the law makes no allowance on this account; while it is equally clear from Revelation, that the Judge of all men does. And is it right for man to be less lenient than his Maker; to take his fellow sinner by the throat, demanding, "pay me that thou owest;" when infinite justice has proclaimed that a man shall be judged according to what he hath; not according to what he hath not?

If the impracticability of human wisdom's making those discriminations which are easy to Omniscience be pleaded in defence, this only heightens, and greatly heightens the obligation of society to bestow that intellectual and moral training, for the want of which its legal exactions make no allowance, and in consequence of human ignorance can make no allowance, even at the bidding of justice and mercy.

But these are selfish sources of obligation. I mention, lastly, one that is more noble and more binding, even the command of the Almighty, "thou shalt not kill." If this be violated by withholding needful nourishment and exercise from the body, much more is it by denying suitable aliment and discipline to the soul.

The existence of the sacred right to education, and of the obligation to bestow it as founded on

the will of God, is further indicated by the condition in which an infant is born, and the responsibility with which he becomes invested in after life. He is held accountable by God for the discharge of duties for which education alone can fit him. This fitness, however, owing to the ignorance and helplessness of infancy, he is unable to acquire himself; it must therefore be secured to him by others, who as his natural guardians and sponsors, become accountable for his enjoying that amount of developement both of body and soul, which shall qualify him for answering the end of his existence. Of course, a failure to bestow this fitness subjects the sponsors to a large amount of the responsibility which, under different circumstances, would appertain exclusively to the educated child. The Almighty asserts his claim to the service of every power physical and spiritual which he has bestowed; and if it be not rendered in consequence of the want of education, or through miseducation, the guilt is mainly theirs to whom the existence of this disqualification is attributable.

From this it appears that there are some who are charged by the Creator with bestowing a suitable education on every human being; and as an obligation to give, implies in another a right to receive, it is hence inferred that every human being possesses a divine right to receive an education.

The circumstances under which a person is brought into the world imply a promise of education. This promise made by the parents is endorsed by society ; and if the child do not receive its due at the hands of the original promiser, it has a right to come upon the endorser. Unless a fraud be practised upon it, therefore, its prospect of education is certain.

The existence of this right and obligation, so far as the growth and nourishment of the body are concerned, is practically acknowledged by society in all civilized countries. If a father, who has means, be so stingy or so cruel as to deny his children food, the law compels him to bestow it ; and where any are destitute of the necessities of life through the unavoidable poverty, or the death of parents, society is taxed for their support. Hence the origin of poor-laws, alms-houses, &c. This much is guarantied by the inspired command, which affords a security for the enjoyment of the food and circumstances requisite for the healthy growth of the body, no less than against the maiming of any of its members, or the summary destruction of life. And thus it is and should be in all respects with reference to education. The mind is of infinitely more importance than the body : in infancy and childhood it is just as helpless ; and every consideration that enjoins the duty of providing for the support of the latter, demonstrates with

augmented force, the obligation to attend to the intellectual and moral culture of the former.

To stint the growth of the body, or to injure its health, either by withholding food, or by mechanical means, is not one hundredth part so cruel as by neglect to hinder the developement of the powers of the soul.

What is it in the story of Casper Hauser that excites such indignation as well as sympathy in our bosoms, but the case of "soul murder," which it exhibits? But is not every human being whose education has been slighted, or who has been miseducated, just as really and for the same reasons an object of sympathy? The power of sensible impressions to warp our judgement and modify our feelings, is nowhere more forcibly illustrated than in this connexion. We pity a dwarf whose *body* has attained not half its growth, whilst the hundreds of cases of mental dwarfishness we daily meet with, excite but little notice or commiseration. The sight of a diseased or fractured limb immediately arrests our attention and commands our services, while the constant inspection of vice and ignorance, the diseases of the soul, awaken within us comparatively little concern. The process of reasoning, by which we thus determine the right of every individual to education, points out with equal clearness the length to which it should be carried. The claims of chil-

dren upon their parents and upon society, though equal in point of obligation, are not of the same extent. The only limits to the former, are the means of the parent, and the capabilities of the child. The responsibility of the latter extends no further than to bestowing such an elementary training as will qualify each person to take care of himself and to prosecute his own education.

The father who can afford to dispense with the business assistance of his children after their elementary education is completed, so as to afford them leisure for further improvement, is bound to do so. Nor is he at liberty to withhold the means under the pretext of laying by a capital with which they may begin the world. Society is bound to do no more than to prevent the individual from becoming a burden to others, and to fit him to discharge those relative duties for the performance of which it holds him accountable.

Here, then, we have a criterion by which to ascertain the nature and extent of NATIONAL EDUCATION. It by no means proposes the absurd idea of educating all alike. To attempt this, would be to try to accomplish that which, under any circumstances, is from the nature of things impracticable. All are not endowed with the same abilities, and no modification of artificial culture can obliterate native differences of capacity. Besides, all do not enjoy to the same extent

the means of obtaining an education ; and it were vain for government to try to place the children of the rich and poor on a perfect equality in this respect. When legislation shall have done its utmost at creating opportunities for the instruction of all, the rich will have the power, (and in justice to the distinguishing goodness of Providence, they ought to use it,) to push the education of their children vastly and indefinitely beyond what is attainable by those whose parents are more circumscribed in means.

In undertaking the work of education at all, government, as the representative and agent of society, is influenced by two considerations : its duty to individuals, and its duty to society. Its duty to individuals is measured by their rights ; its duty to society, by its wants.

These, as has been already stated, exactly coincide in their demands ; both being satisfied by the bestowment of such an amount of instruction, and of physical, intellectual, and moral development to every individual, as will enable him to take care of himself, so that he may avoid becoming a burden to the community ; and to perform the duties growing out of his relations to God and to society, so that he may swell the amount of general happiness. The inquiry which I am concerned to make, is not, how much education is *desirable* for every one, and for society, but

how much is *essential*? It relates not to the maximum, but to a minimum.

The questions therefore, which I chiefly propose to consider, are substantially the following, viz :

What kind and amount of education do the circumstances of society in the United States require *all its members* should receive?

What, and how much is every child, irrespectively of the character or condition of its parents, entitled to claim, and government consequently bound to give?

And what arrangements had best be made for the purpose of complying with this requirement, of meeting these claims, and of discharging this obligation?

These questions, though they do not constitute the heads of the formal divisions of this volume, indicate correctly and comprehensively the nature of its contents.

From this statement, it is obvious that my investigations are to be limited to the elementary education which the government should provide for all the children under its control, in its Common Schools.

So far as this extends, I have supposed that it is not only desirable, but essential for political considerations, that in the main, the education of all the children of the nation should be alike, the

point of divergency commencing when they leave the lowest grade of Public Schools.

The time which I have supposed to be requisite for imparting this elementary education in its integrity, is at the lowest calculation, seven years, commencing, say, at the age of seven, and terminating at fourteen. During this period, every child, without exception, is entitled to the leisure and facilities requisite for acquiring the education which it needs to enable it to act its part upon the theatre of life. This follows of necessity as a corollary from the reasoning at the commencement of this chapter.

Civil society, (I have no allusion to any particular form,) is of divine institution. It has its origin in the native propensities and the natural wants of man; and as these are ordained by God, that which properly flows from them is traceable to the same source. Society then, having its foundation in the will of God, cannot be administered on principles contrary to his pleasure; and if, as I have tried to prove, it is his will that every human being should receive a certain amount of education, society has no right to make or to permit arrangements that might prevent it. By so doing, it would not only offend against the rights of individuals, but sin against God.

There is no such thing as an obligation in the gross which is not applicable to details. If, then, it be the duty of society to see that every child



receives an education, it is equally its duty to furnish every thing required for the attainment of this end. Is money requisite? Then it is the duty of society to provide it. Is leisure? Then there nowhere exists the liberty to withhold it. Neither a parent nor society under any circumstances has a right to put children at work so early, nor to keep them at work so long as to deny them the necessary time for getting an education.

The well established principle on which every efficient system of Common Schools is founded, clothes the government *with authority* to secure an education to every child. It virtually places government in the relation of a common parent to all the children under its jurisdiction, and by assuming the relation, it incurs the obligations of a parent, among the first of which is that of giving an education to the young. If therefore the position be correct, that the only possible excuse for parental neglect in this particular, be the unavoidable want of means, society can never be exonerated from its obligation, for it always may command the means, and it has no right to withhold the means of education simply to relieve its purse. — When the sum and substance of parental duty shall be proved to be merely to provide for children, bread and meat and clothes, to take care of the body to the utter neglect of the soul, then may society be released from its obligation to afford to all an opportunity for education, and not

before. The true way of looking at the question of ability to educate all the children of a community is, to consider not the means of individuals, but those of society at large. The aggregate property of the community constitutes the fund for this purpose. Education is a social want: its cost therefore ought to be sustained by society. Popular education is a common good in which every man is interested according to the stake he has depending on the prevalence of order, and therefore should be paid for out of the common purse, and by each individual in proportion to his property, that is, in proportion to his share of the benefit enjoyed.

It will not do to say here that the present structure of society is incompatible with the execution of this theory; for society has no right to put itself upon such a footing as may thwart the benevolent designs of the Creator; and the ceaseless effort of the wise and good and influential ought to be, to bring it back, by the force of public sentiment, to that condition which will be consistent with the enjoyment of natural rights, and favour the accomplishment of the divine intention.

In justice to myself I ought to state explicitly, that my object in this work is to treat of the subject of education, under the guidance of first principles. Of course, just so far as a system is sketched at all, it should be theoretically perfect. In all things good, our aim and standard should be high, no mat-

ter how defective we may find our execution. The judicious artist selects a perfect model for the imitation of his pupil. A child cannot paint a rose the better, for having a daubed picture rather than the beautiful original before it. And in the solemn business of religion, our aspirations ought not to be lower than to imitate Jesus, and thus be perfect as our Father in Heaven is perfect ; because we hear the Apostle Paul lamenting the imperfection of even *his* attainments.

“ I cherish no such visionary expectation as that all the views presented in this volume are immediately practicable ; nor do I believe that it would be expedient to attempt at once the execution of them all. None but an exceedingly imperfect system would admit of this.

My object is to throw out such ideas as from ten or fifteen years of reading, reflection, and experience, appear to me of great importance. Not that I consider the views presented as originating with myself. Far from it. I rejoice, and am confirmed in my confidence in them, when I see that they are cherished by the reflecting and experienced in almost every part of christendom. What is chiefly to be desired now is, that they should be propagated and applied ; and I shall feel that I have been amply rewarded, if it shall appear hereafter, that my humble efforts have contributed in any manner to the accomplishment of an object of such incalculable moment.

## CHAPTER II.

### POLITICAL NECESSITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

#### SECTION I.

Morality the stay of American institutions. — Opinion of a foreigner. — Bishop Otey on the necessity of popular morality. — The prevailing education addressed entirely to the understanding. — Intelligence and virtue not necessarily coexistent. — Moral education more important than intellectual. — Popular virtue not of necessity included in the spread of popular intelligence. — The United States need a more sturdy kind of virtue than that founded on expediency.

IN a society where every man may do pretty much as he pleases, it is of the utmost importance that its members be so educated that they shall choose to do right. Such a society is that in the United States. By usage, and the constitutions of our country, the will of the majority is law, from which if it be wrong, there is no appeal; and for whose decisions, if they be injurious, there is no redress. The prospect, therefore, of social

order and happiness, bears an exact proportion to the nearness with which the majority approach infallibility. Hence the necessity for the general prevalence of intellectual and moral culture of the highest order, in a republic.

An intelligent foreigner who has studied the structure of our institutions with great discernment, happily describes the dependent relation they sustain to popular virtue, in the following language :

“I consider (says he) that domestic virtue of the Americans is the principal source of all their other qualities. It acts as a promoter of industry, as a stimulus to enterprise, and is the most powerful restrainer of public vice. It reduces life to its simplest elements, and makes happiness less dependent on precarious circumstances ; it ensures the proper education of children, and acts by the force of example on the morals of the rising generation ; in short, it does more for the preservation of peace and good order than all the laws enacted for that purpose ; and is a better guarantee for the permanency of the American government than any written instrument, the constitution itself not excepted.

“No government could be established on the same principles as that of the United States with a different code of morals. The American constitution is remarkable for its simplicity : but it can only suffice a people habitually correct in

their actions ; and would be utterly inadequate to the wants of a different nation.

“Change the domestic habits of the Americans, their religious devotion, and their high respect for morality, and it will not be necessary to change a single letter of the constitution in order to vary the whole form of their government.

“The circumstances being altered, the same causes would no longer produce the same effects ; and it is more than probable, that the disparity which would then exist between the laws and the habits of those whom they are destined to govern, would not only make a different government desirable, but absolutely necessary to preserve the nation from ruin.”

The cogency and clearness of its reasoning supply me with a sufficient apology for introducing an additional quotation, for the purpose of showing, that the important truths just stated, have not been overlooked among ourselves. It is from the pen of a distinguished fellow-citizen whose comprehensive views and schemes of education, I fondly hope, are destined to exert a powerful influence, not only upon the respectable body of Christians with which he is connected, but through them, also upon the sentiments and practice of society at large.

The Rt. Rev. James H. Otey, Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Tennessee, in one of his annual addresses to Convention observes :

"I wish to show that in the mighty rush which has been making by our enterprising countrymen to occupy the rich plains of the South, conservative principles have been lost sight of, and that there is real and imminent danger of their being totally disregarded. The elements of Christianity are far more deeply and intimately interwoven with the frame-work of society, and of our civil institutions, than is generally supposed, or than is apparent to slight reflection. That which most nations have laid at the basis of their civil regulations, and incorporated with the fundamental laws of the land, our countrymen have taken for granted. They have supposed that our people would at all times be virtuous and enlightened, and that they would guard with vestal vigilance, the precious deposit of civil and religious freedom committed to their trust, by some of the wisest and most pious men the world has ever known. Our entire form of government is constructed upon this idea; nor has it a single provision to meet a state of things, which must inevitably result from a want of intelligence and sound moral principle, in the mass of community. The constitution of every state in the Union, supposes that our citizens can read — that they can acquaint themselves with the laws — that they have virtue to sustain and enforce the laws — that they can scan the conduct of their representatives, and that they can protect their rights from usurpation and un-

warrantable invasion by their public servants. Thus we see, that for the execution of civil enactments — for obedience to the constituted authorities of the country, and for the security and happiness of society, we have to look to the prevalence of a sound moral sentiment among the people.

“Indeed, such is the nature of our government, that it is obvious to reflection, that public sentiment not only originates the law, but sometimes becomes superior to it, rendering it null and virtually void. The statutes of the legislature are for the most part nothing more than public sentiment assuming a particular shape from passing through the forms of legislation. Let the current of popular favour set strongly in behalf of any particular measure, and nothing is more certain than that that measure will presently assume the form of law. Equally potential is public sentiment when opposed to an existing law of the land. Thus a breach of the Lord’s day takes place with impunity, not a magistrate of the country deeming it due to his oath of office to notice such a violation. The same may be said in regard to profanity. Duels likewise take place in sight of the halls of legislation, in defiance of all the sanctions and solemnities of law, human or divine. — *But may not*

“Now all this results from the deterioration of public morals — from overlooking the great cardinal and conservative principles of our institutions; and if the process continues, as it is likely to do, in



the mighty impulse that moves our citizens to 'compass sea and land,' and penetrate the depths of the wilderness to 'gather pelf,' it is perfectly evident that it may and must end in the subversion of all government by law, and throw society back upon its original elements : or what is more frightful to contemplate as a probable issue, the strong hand of despotism may seize upon and sway the sceptre of arbitrary power over a land watered by the tears and hallowed by the blood of some of the most pious, enlightened, and patriotic men, that have ever struggled for civil and religious liberty. I feel perfectly confident that this view of our actual condition and prospects, must approve itself to the judgement of every reflecting man as just : and it is only necessary to see this subject in the light in which it is here but very faintly presented ; in order to perceive that it is to the interest of every man in this community, who values his dear-bought and inestimable privileges, to provide means for averting the progress of an evil which is every day and hour deepening and widening its influences. "As Christians and friends of our country, we cannot feel uninterested in these matters ; *as teachers of religion, it is our duty to inform ourselves about them.*"

\* Our sense of the importance of these statements, can be equalled only by the depth of our regret that they are not felt ; or if felt, are not practically heeded by us as a nation. We profess to be convinced of the political necessity of the preva-

lence of education, and we have made considerable efforts to secure it; but it is a species of education which is addressed wholly to the understanding.

It is a mortifying circumstance, that the church as well as the nation at large, needs to be aroused to the practical importance of the truth, that intelligence alone, however accumulated and diffused, will not suffice for the safety and well-being of a self-governing community. There is among us an idolatrous respect for intellect, in which Christians largely participate; which, without repentance, will bring upon us, if not the vengeance of Heaven, yet certainly and in no measured forms, the suffering that always awaits the disobedience of natural laws.

It is true "Knowledge is *power*;" but we seem to forget that it is potent for evil as well as good; and that whether its effects be good or ill, depends entirely upon the dispositions and sentiments by which it is impelled and guided. The greatest scourges of our race have been men of gigantic *cultivated* intellect; and omniscience would be a terrific attribute of the Deity were it not allied with infinite benevolence. If there be a case in which unquestionably "ignorance would be bliss," it is that where knowledge but qualifies its possessor for inflicting misery. Under such circumstances, intelligence is emphatically a curse.

There is nothing clearer from experience than

that a high degree of intelligence may co-exist with a large amount of vice. It is far from being uncommon to find those whose opportunities of observing men have been the most extensive, entertaining the belief that the highest order of talents, and great moral worth, are seldom found united in the same individual.

The voice of history too justifies this impression, declaring unequivocally that a large proportion, if not a majority of great men, or of those who by virtue of their intellectual superiority have risen highest in human estimation and influence, have been bad men. How is it that Washington, and Marshall, and Wilberforce, and John Jay, and Patrick Henry, and a few other benefactors of mankind, stand out so prominently amidst the *crowd* of great men immortalized in history? The answer is, because such men have been few in number. We single them out because their group is small. They are conspicuous, because they are acknowledged exceptions; and they are exceptions, with reference more to their moral, than their intellectual greatness. That panegyrist of these men is singularly faulty, whose praises are not summed with an account of their piety, their philanthropy, their patriotism, and their many private virtues. It is simply because of these that the remark is true, that "though there have been many Cæsars, the world has seen but one Washington."

What too has been the almost uniform character of the courts of kings, around which the most learned and able men of a nation are usually gathered? Thousands have been the volumes composed to satirize their vices; but very few indeed, professedly and sincerely to eulogize their virtues. It can by no means be said either, of those who have been most distinguished as poets, historians, philosophers, statesmen, and generals, that they have been proportionally remarkable for their moral and religious worth; nor does the language of observation testify, that at the present day, those who are the most eminent for their intelligence, are at the same time the most virtuous. Of the nations of antiquity, Greece and Rome were much the most enlightened; and it cannot be questioned that they were among the most corrupt. The greatest strength of the Barbarians who over-ran the latter, consisted in the internal weakness consequent upon the vices which reigned within the capital, and spread their baneful influence out upon the provinces. It is worthy of observation too, that the Roman empire was most enlightened during its decline and gradual overthrow, precisely the period when it was most corrupt; whilst her proudest and most virtuous days were prior to the dawn of science; her youth having been a season of comparative ignorance and virtue; her old age, of intelligence and vice.

Were we obliged to speak of the relative

importance of two things, both of which are essential, we could not hesitate to say that society has more occasion for the moral, than the intellectual education of its members. This is uniformly and practically acknowledged by our legislators, since law is generally addressed to the moral faculties of men. Differences of intellectual power, whether native or the result of education, it seldom takes into consideration, when deciding upon the guilt or innocence of a criminal at the bar. All penal laws, that is, all whether civil or criminal, to which any penalty is annexed, take it for granted that an observance of them by all to whom they are addressed is practicable. They are not enacted with a view to enlighten the community on the subject of morals, nor to supply capacity for obedience. They are made necessary not by ignorance, but by indisposition to do right; and therefore amount to an attempt to coerce or prevent by force, what ought to be and might be avoided or performed from principle. Of the two, then, ignorance and vice, it is evident that the latter is much the greater foe to good government; for whilst, as has been stated, all penal laws presuppose the possession of knowledge, or the power to obtain it, (as is evinced by the maxim "ignorance of the law excuseth no man,") they equally assume that the peace of society is in danger from the existence of a disposition on the part of many, to do wrong.

The difficulty of being good, consists, not so much in knowing how, as in the want of inclination. Generally speaking, there is no knowledge more easy of attainment than that of right and wrong. The judgement would not often be embarrassed in its efforts to distinguish them, were it not for the warping influence of passion, prejudice, or some improper feeling. In other words, if the heart were right, the head would seldom err in pointing out the path of duty. Were it not for this, there would be no equity in punishment. The sentiments of society revolt at the idea of inflicting suffering for the commission of crime under an unavoidable absence of a knowledge of its impropriety. This it is which exempts idiots and infants from responsibility; and yet the plea of ignorance is seldom instituted in defence of a criminal arraigned before the bar of justice for theft, or murder, or any other violation of the laws.

The superior importance of popular virtue is manifest also from the republican nature of our institutions. In a commercial partnership, when several men unite their capital and efforts for the accumulation of money, integrity and skill on the part of all concerned, are both of them desirable, but they are not equally essential. It may suffice that only one or two possess a superior knowledge of business, but it is indispensable that all be honest. The absence of principle in a single part-

ner may defeat the end of the association. A wise man and a fool, if both be just, may transact business together with success. Not so a wise man and a knave. And thus it is with an association for any other purpose — for that of government for instance. In a self-managing community, it may answer that *the few* be intelligent ; *the many* must be virtuous. It does not require a large number of educated minds to enact good laws when there is a disposition in the people to obey them. In such a case, the majority may be as ignorant as savages, and yet the government flow on smoothly, if wisely and humanely administered by an autocrat. But the reverse of this in no case could be possible. The moment the morals of the people at large become corrupt, society is set ajar ; every thing is out of joint ; discord ensues ; peace and tranquillity are destroyed ; and the safety of the government is put in jeopardy.

A wholesome state of public morals therefore is far more essential in a republic than popular intelligence. A nation of devils would furnish poor material for a society, though each of them should be as intelligent as Milton's Belial.

Our error, however, consists not so much in supposing that popular virtue may be safely dispensed with, (the contrary is universally alleged,) as in assuming that *it will of necessity be included in the spread of popular intelligence* ; a position

which neither philosophy, nor history, nor observation will sustain.

We have heard of a father who, having taught his oldest son to read and write, gave as a reason for not educating the remainder of his family, that the first use the former made of his "larning" was, to forge his name ; and if coexistence always implies causation, it might be very plausibly maintained, as we have already shown, that mental illumination was favourable to vice.

As our schools are conducted at present, it is exceedingly questionable whether they have not an immoral rather than a moral tendency. Of a given number of youths, the half of whom shall pass through college and the various preparatory schools, and the other half be brought up in habits of industry at home, the probabilities of virtuous character are much in favour of the latter. The moral exposure of the former is incomparably greater, whilst the course of education to which they are subjected, does but little to fortify their hearts against the encroachments of vice.

Our political theory, if rightly interpreted by our practice, takes it for granted, that if we make our youth intelligent they will make themselves virtuous. But does the experience of individuals or of communities justify this inference ? Do the prevailing opinions of society authorize it ? What are the general impressions of mankind as to the moral tendencies of our race ? Unquestionably



that they are to evil — that to contract bad habits we have only to be idle, to give them opportunity to grow — but that improvement of the character is a laborious business, requiring effort ; strenuous, judicious, and unceasing effort.

The sum and substance of the political creed of republican America, at least when judged of by her educational arrangements, is, that to qualify a man to become a good citizen, capable of taking part in the administration of the government, all you have to do is to teach him to read and write and cipher !

All such expectations, however, involve a total misconception of the nature of virtue.

As well may we expect that constant motion of the fingers alone, whilst all the other members of the body remain inactive, will invigorate the general system, as that the isolated exercise of the intellectual faculties will give a healthy tone to the moral powers. Virtue is a habit ; and the only way to induce a habit, is by long continued and *appropriate* practice.

It has been often said in commendation of popular education in the United States, “educate the people so that they may understand their true interests and they will be infallible, they will not sin against themselves.” But is this supported by experience ? Is it true of individuals ? Does the miser deny that charity is a virtue ? or the drunkard the expediency of temperance ? Are all

men strictly just who subscribe the maxim, "honesty is the best policy?" or, are all those hearty and consistent Christians who are convinced that there is another world for which it is their highest interest to prepare in this? Few things are more frequently at variance than one's judgement or conscience, and his conduct. Almost all men are theoretically good, and are sincerely persuaded it is their interest to be so practically; still, those who "sin against themselves" are very largely in the majority. Even "devils believe and tremble," but they continue devils still.

Our national circumstances require a far more sturdy kind of virtue than that which is founded on expediency. The latter, upon which we have hitherto relied, threatens to fail us even in the incipient stage of our political trials. It is not true that all persons are capable, even with the greatest aid from intellectual cultivation, of always forming a just estimate of their interests; and if they were, they would not act up to it.

Expediency, therefore, as a rule of conduct is neither safe nor practicable. It is not safe, because of the warping influence which our wishes and prejudices have upon our judgements. Men, like children, are greatly influenced and determined in their conduct by the proximity of rewards and punishments. A child would prefer a single sixpence now, to half a dozen promised to be paid next month. The threat of punishment to be inflicted

twelve months hence, would have but little influence on the present conduct of servants or soldiers. Objects appear large or small to the intellectual, as to our corporeal vision ; that is, according to the distance. There would be very few confirmed drunkards, if the awful effects of habitual intemperance were experienced by each individual the first time he indulged in the use of alcoholic drinks ; and it is not because the young doubt the uniform testimony of age as to the ultimate consequences, that they are so prodigal of their health by personal exposure, by dissipation, and by compliance with the extravagant demands of fashion.

Expediency as a rule of conduct is not practicable, because few or none know how to use it. It is an essential requisite for a moral rule, that it shall suit all moral beings, of all stations, ages, and conditions. Now when we recollect, that to estimate the real tendency, and therefore the expediency of an action, we must often look at the remote and not at the immediate results ; we must anticipate as far as from childhood to old age, and sometimes take into consideration the other world, the influence of our present conduct on our happiness hundreds of ages hence ; it is evident there is required an intellectual reach and power of which the most highly cultivated are incapable. What then is to become of the mass of mankind ; the comparatively ignorant, and the

inexperienced? What encouragement have ordinary men to direct their mental vision where the eagle eye of genius cannot penetrate? Where experience is puzzled, what is youth to do?

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## SECTION II.

Not enough that Government in the United States *tolerate* the Christian Religion. — Religious education of our youth essential to national prosperity. — No such thing as popular morality without a religious basis. — Washington's opinion on this subject. — Bible the best, and an essential instrument of moral culture — planned and bestowed by God for this purpose; its use therefore no less obligatory on nations than individuals. — Bible contains the only perfect system of morals. — Evils resulting from false theories of morals.

By these preliminary remarks, the reader is prepared in some measure to appreciate one of the leading propositions of this volume, which is, that the popular virtue which is essential under a government like ours, can be produced only by means of the Christian Religion engrafted upon our systems of popular education.

In other words; it is not enough that the inhabitants of the United States be made intelligent, or even moral in the ordinary sense of the term. **WE MUST BE A RELIGIOUS PEOPLE;** and this cannot be effected, unless the Bible be enthroned in all our schools, legislative or public, as well as

private ; and unless all our schemes of education be thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the religion of Jesus, considered not only as a moral code or rule of conduct, but likewise as a sentiment, and source of motives.

Experience, I trust, is about to force upon us the lesson which reason and conscience should have long since taught us, that it will not answer for a government constituted as ours is, to say that it will *tolerate* the Christian Religion. It must do far more than this. It must espouse it. It must appropriate it as its soul, its life, its stay, its cementing bond, and the sheet anchor of its hopes. Just as well may the body dispense with food, the earth with fructifying showers, a palace with a foundation, a steamboat with its rudder, or the Emperor of Russia with his standing army ; and it is altogether inappropriate to speak of tolerating that which is indispensable. The prejudices of the Pagan and the Mahomedan are respected (as they should be) by our laws. We may very properly speak of *tolerating* them. Judaism is *permitted*. Deism and even Atheism may be endured. But something more must be done for the Christian Religion by a republican people. They must adopt, and cherish, and apply it, and obey its guidance, or else they will be compelled to change their form of government. Our government could not subsist a single generation without the Bible, and the religion which it

teaches. It dares not discard its assistance. Why then object, or be indifferent to the application of its principles to education, for the purpose of forming the national character? Evil surely awaits that system which is incompatible with genuine bible influences. Such will have a permanent and invincible antagonist always embarrassing its operations.

Public sentiment is fast advancing to the recognition of these truths, and is inviting the friends of the Bible, to take their post and do their duty. For example; the impression has of late years rapidly gained ground, that our colleges are not manageable without religious influences; and the experiment might with safety be submitted to the choice of the most inveterate infidel, (provided he were endowed with ordinary political sagacity,) of demolishing our churches; or of converting them into theatres or even school-houses; of obliterating the Sabbath; and dispensing in all respects with the influences of the Christian Religion. He would not appropriate the offer. The French Revolution, a beacon, which mere selfishness dare not disregard, is too fresh in history to permit him. He feels that the Bible, its institutions, its ministers, its hallowed tendencies, are absolutely essential to the maintenance of government.

The Bible has a hold upon society which can neither be sundered nor slighted. It were easier, by ten thousand times, to revolutionize our gov-

ernment, and establish in its stead a Turkish despotism, than to revolutionize our religion, to substitute the Koran for the Bible, or to eradicate its influence in a Christian community. The very constitution of human nature, its condition, its wants, its hopes, its fears, must all be radically changed before the Christian Religion can be abrogated. Nothing therefore but the Omnipotence to which it refers its origin and preservation, is adequate to its suppression ; and whilst it lives, it cannot fail to exert a powerful influence in regulating the affections, the sentiments, the conduct, and the affairs of men. For these, and other reasons such as these, it behooves the friends of the Bible to make larger, and bolder demands in its behalf. It does not receive its due ; and patriotism and philanthropy, no less than religious duty, imperatively call for a louder and more urgent statement of its claims.

The religious education of the youth of our country under the guidance of the Bible is absolutely indispensable. The welfare of the country cannot be secured without it. The happiness of a nation is but a multiple of the happiness of individuals. It is the same in kind, and can be produced only by the extended operation of the same causes.

Is it true of personal happiness, that it does not consist in idleness, in selfishness, in wealth, in luxuries, in sensual gratifications, in vicious indulgen-

cies of any sort? So it is of national. Is the felicity of an individual derived from the constant and appropriate employment of all the faculties of his nature, the moral and religious, as well as the intellectual and physical? from temperance, from moderation, from contentment, from the acquisition and application of knowledge? from the exercise of the benevolent affections, from love to God and man, to his family, his friends, his neighbour, and even to his enemies?

All this is true; and, if possible, more emphatically true, of a whole community of individuals. A nation is not a chemical compound in which the character of the constituent elements is disguised or neutralized, possessing new and totally different properties simply in consequence of combination. It is more like the mechanical aggregate, which is a homogeneous mass, differing in nothing but in size from the integrant particles that compose it. If this reasoning be correct, we have possession of an infallible test by which to determine the relation that the Bible sustains to national prosperity and happiness. Can a single man or woman afford to dispense with the light of its doctrines, the guidance of its precepts, the restraint of its admonitions, the support and consolation of its promises? Then millions cannot. Can a single individual be happy who is the slave of selfish and dissocial passions; of anger, pride, revenge, malevolence in all its forms? If not, a myriad of such beings would only aggravate each other's wretchedness.



I am fully aware of the delicacy of the ground I am now approaching ; and yet I feel compelled to speak with frankness, from an irrepressible conviction, that our national circumstances call upon us to survey it, and with the least possible delay. No one is more deeply sensible, than am I, of the difficulty, as well as of the importance of the problem, which relates to the union of the religion of our country, with the education of our country. I perceive, clearly enough, the prejudices that must be overcome, the jealousies which must be allayed, and the conflicting interests that must be reconciled, in attempting to effect it. I would therefore speak with becoming diffidence and caution, rather in the way of suggestion than of recommendation as to modes ; but of its absolute necessity, I deem it utterly impossible to speak too strongly.

Consistency, it seems to me, must oblige all those who regard the binding sanctions of religion as necessary to the existence of popular morality, and of popular virtue to national prosperity ; to look upon it as entirely essential, that popular education should be thoroughly imbued with a religious spirit. There is no other way in which the general prevalence of sound morality can be effected. This must be done, if done at all, through the agency of the Bible operating on the tender hearts and minds of children and of youth.

It may safely be assumed as settled, that there

is no such thing as genuine popular morality without a religious basis. Religion and morality cannot be separated. They are united by indissoluble ties. The one sustains to the other the relation which a part does to the whole. Morality is a chain which is dependent on religion for support. It is like machinery united with a mainspring, without whose influence it can have no movement. The father of our country but echoes the voice of experience, and of the wise in all ages, when he advises us "to indulge with caution the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion ;" alleging that "whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

To the same effect is the testimony of a celebrated living authority, Victor Cousin, whose opinion, as it embodies that of the better part of the French nation is, for obvious reasons, entitled to peculiar weight upon this subject. Addressing the minister of public instruction, in his report, he exclaims with an earnestness expressive of the importance he attached to the idea, "Thank God, sir, you are too enlightened a statesman to think that true popular instruction can exist without moral education, *popular morality without religion*, or popular religion without a church." When France, as is thus manifest, concedes this point, it

were madness for any other nation to hold it under discussion.

If the Supreme Being, in the exercise of infinite wisdom and goodness, has seen fit to prescribe a mode in which the moral faculties of our nature shall be developed ; if he have given written instructions for the express purpose of guiding us in the formation of our characters, then two inferences are unavoidable, viz : first, that the Bible containing these instructions, is the very best instrument which could possibly be devised to answer this end ; and second, that it is the duty of every human being to acknowledge its authority, and to use it in his efforts for his own and other's moral improvement. This implied command is just as binding on us in our social, as in our personal capacity ; on nations as really as on individuals ; for numbers do not alter the nature, nor lessen the force of moral obligation.

The standard of public morals ought to be at least as high as that of private. We do not get rid of our responsibility by becoming members of society. The same authority which has made personal well-being depend on goodness, has also said, that it is "righteousness" and righteousness only which "exalteth a nation."

The precepts of the Bible are universal laws made for the human race ; and are equally obligatory on individuals, families, neighbourhoods, and nations. The Bible is the moral constitution

for the entire family of man. When it furnishes specific rules, they are binding on all ; and when these are wanting, its principles are the criteria by which human legislators must be guided in supplying them. It respects not persons nor their circumstances. The rich and poor are equally amenable to its authority. Kings are as much obligated to yield obedience as their subjects ; the government as the governed. In this country, Congress and our state governments are bound to legislate according to its dictates and its spirit.

It affords a rule by which at once the acts of the representatives may be tested, and the represented be fitted to exercise the delicate right of instruction. How would the business of making laws be simplified, if in cases affecting the conflicting interests of individuals, districts, and nations, the question chiefly and honestly debated were, what is right ?

Our representatives should legislate with the Bible in their hands, and the people approach the poles with its principles deeply seated in their hearts.

This world as a whole, or in any of its subdivisions, large or small, cannot go on smoothly, until in all its arrangements it is in harmony with the divine will. A nation cannot prosper so long as it refuses to acknowledge its accountability to the Judge of all men ; and the Bible alone tells us how to act up to that accountability. It is

the only book which assigns a satisfactory reason for the derangement that pervades our world, and it is the only source from which we can obtain a correct and ample knowledge of the remedy. It ascribes all to the fact that man is endeavouring to gratify his instinctive thirst for happiness in a sinful and impracticable way, by methods of his own devising, to the neglect or violation of the plan of God ; and consequently, as disobedience is the cause of all suffering, so repentance, faith, and obedience are the only possible road to real happiness. This is a universal truth ; applicable to the greatest nation as much as to the humblest individual. To assert the contrary would be just as absurd as to suppose that the law of gravitation which holds of an atom, does not appertain to a pyramid, which is but a combination of atoms. In both cases, the force of the law is only increased by augmentation.

This looks like axiomatical reasoning, and yet it is not superfluous, because not practically heeded. Where is the legislature in our country which sufficiently and consistently recognises the supreme authority of the Bible ? The fault, however, is with their masters the people, who do not bid them do so. The people therefore must be changed ; their sentiments, their dispositions, their habits of thinking and of feeling, before this universal derangement can cease or be diminished.

The only way to effect so great a change, is to

employ the preventive influence of education, so as to keep future generations from becoming like the present. The Bible therefore must be brought to bear upon the hearts and consciences of the children of the nation ; in other words, it must be universally introduced into our elementary schools as the great instrument of moral culture ; for it is in these schools alone that all the children of the country can be reached. No matter what may be the point from which we set out to reason on the subject, we are forced at last to this conclusion. To avoid it fairly, is impossible. There is no other way of achieving the great end of moral education. It cannot be accomplished without the aid and guidance of the rules and motives of the Bible. No where else whatever can we find a correct system of morals. The sages of Greece and Rome, with as much of mind and study as human nature is capable of applying to any subject, left that of morals exceedingly imperfect. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, who approached perhaps as near the verge of the limits assigned the human faculties as any other uninspired men, felt, and owned the necessity of a revelation. Had they been permitted to listen to the teachings of Jesus, in all probability they would have been fully satisfied. They would have perceived that the business of discovery in the region of morals was forever terminated. It is impossible to improve on that which is already

perfect. Since the completion of the sacred volume, all improvements in religion have been and must ever be "advances backward." The Christian Religion has been encumbered with human appendages foreign to its nature and uncongenial with its spirit, and of these it may be disabused; but what it wants and what alone it is capable of receiving on this account is restoration, not improvement. *We* may improve in our methods of applying it — of bringing its energies to bear upon the minds and hearts of men; but it is a sad misnomer to pronounce this an improvement of the system. We can no more improve the Christian Religion, than we can the laws of chemical attraction, or of the animal economy, and for the very same reason.

It is impossible to calculate the harm which has been done by our persisting to theorize and systematize upon topics which have been completely unfolded by the Son of God. It is strange and lamentable that we should continue to light up the dim torch of reason to elucidate a subject which has been illumined by the full blaze of the Sun of Righteousness. Our conduct in this particular, is one of the innumerable illustrations of the centrifugal tendency which has marked the actions of mankind since the sin of our first parents. A great and distinguishing peculiarity of the Christian system is, that it fastens every thing on God. He is the source from which all emanates,

the centre to which all tends. His will is at once the reason and the rule of human conduct ; and to fear him, and keep his commandments, is proclaimed to be the whole duty of man. But all reference to God is banished in the popular notions of morality. They give consideration solely to the claims of our fellow-men, and to the *consequences* of our conduct to ourselves.

Even Christian writers have been betrayed into this "snare of the devil," and have helped to thicken and perpetuate the moral darkness of the world, by deriving from expediency, and sympathy, and other secondary sources, their flimsy and inoperative systems of moral science.

Thank God, however, there are cheering indications of a change ; and Dymond and Wayland deserve the thanks of all the friends of the Bible and of their species, for helping to unmask this most pernicious error.

But we are chiefly indebted for this prospect, under Providence, to that benevolent feature in the moral government of God, the self-correcting tendency of evils.

Painful and critical experience is beginning to admonish the civilized world, and most emphatically the people of the United States, that with the universal advances of the democratic spirit, society stands in need of some more substantial safeguard, and of some less ambiguous criterion of duty, than mere considerations of expediency.



Our country is becoming infested with a class of men, (whose numbers, already formidable, are constantly increasing and with geometrical rapidity,) that have nothing to lose and every thing to gain by changes in the circumstances of society. Oppressed with the leisure which laziness affords, they seek relief from ennui by disturbing the peace of others. Popular excitement is their element. Looking upon the rich as their natural enemies, they are constantly complaining of the unequal distribution of wealth, and in a political struggle are always found arrayed against property. Under the impression that the existing state of things is adverse to their interests, they are ever ready to go "en masse" against it; and they never want leaders.

But who that regards expediency as the reason and the rule of human conduct, can consistently complain of this? These men are habitually told that their "being's end and aim is happiness;" that perfect liberty in the pursuit of this ranks among the unalienable rights; that in republican governments every man is free to follow the dictates of his own judgement; and as they very naturally believe themselves to be the best judges of their own interests, they easily persuade themselves that a division of property would be promotive of them; that a revolution in the existing state of things would be conducive to their happiness; that it is expedient therefore there should be

a change ; and accordingly, and with perfect consistency, they act in a body to produce it.

Their conduct is the natural result of the false theory of morals under which they have been reared ; and this theory must remain in force so long as the fundamental maxim which gives rise to it is so generally, nay, so universally misinterpreted by society. It is not true in the popular sense of the expression, that our "being's end and aim is happiness." Were it so, as we are taught from our childhood upward, then it would be obviously just that we should regulate our conduct by our notions of expediency ; that we should pay supreme regard to that which we may suppose would conduce to the end of our being, here, the attainment of earthly happiness. But the end of our being is, and its highest aim should be, "to do the will of Him that sent us ;" and thus to seek for that felicity which relates to a future as well as to the present world. This is the foundation of a sublime yet simple code of morals which a child may understand, and the most ignorant successfully apply. It formed the sum and substance of the laws by which "the Son of Man" was guided ; and society will never cease to be morally unmanageable until this sentiment be instilled into the bosoms of our youth from infancy to manhood ; and the easily answered questions, what is proper ? what is right ? — in other words, what would God have me to do ? be substituted in room of the

perplexing and delusive inquiries, what is expedient? what will promote my interests? Unless this change take place, the popular self-will, misled by an erroneous and loose morality, will continue to plunge into increasing and still greater lawlessness, till the condition of society will be past endurance, if not past remedy.

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### SECTION III.

The state of public morals in the United States perhaps never worse than at present, when so much is doing for Public Education. — This owing to the unnatural separation of Intellectual and moral culture. — In attempting a reform, we should aim to make Education not merely moral but religious — for this purpose ought to have pious teachers. — Judicious appeals to the sense of duty, the best means of managing children. — Practice of the Author with his Pupils. — Teachers must be trained for the purpose before Christian Education become general. — Appeal to Christians and Ministers. — Intellectual and moral Education not only compatible but mutually beneficial — Importance of reuniting them.

THE present aspect of things in our country, forces upon us one of two conclusions; either, that there is something exceedingly faulty about our plans of popular education, or else that the hopes which we have entertained of the beneficial influence of education on society, are fallacious; for it is certain, that in no part of the United States has it had the effect contemplated as necessary by the

theory of our government. A great deal has been done of late years to advance the cause of public instruction ; but what has it accomplished for the interests of public virtue ? What are the condition and prospect of American morals ? Is all well ? Are there not many who believe that, in despite of colleges, academies, and common schools, we are rapidly degenerating ? that our situation is at present well nigh desperate ? and is there not abundant cause for apprehension that what is already bad, is fast becoming worse ?

Is the spirit of legislation more honest and disinterested than it was in the earlier days of the republic ? Is patriotism gaining the ascendancy over avarice and ambition ? Can we bring the savage to attest that we are more virtuous than our immediate forefathers ? Are we getting to attach a greater degree of sanctity to the sabbath and to oaths than formerly ? Is the sacred character of juror more respected, or more worthily and consistently maintained ? Are the ends of justice less interrupted by favouritism, money, party feeling, or other sinister considerations ; and more easily and effectually attained than during our early history, when public education was scarcely talked of ? Has the law become so prompt and faithful in vindicating injured reputation that it is no longer deemed disreputable to resort to it for protection and redress ? Is the thirst for luxurious indulgence on the wane ? Has the lust for instantaneous wealth, the desire of fortune without the use of means ;

in short, the gambling propensity, been growing weaker? Is party feeling becoming shorn of its acerbity, its selfishness, its recklessness? Have the spirit of insubordination, of disrespect of law, and a disposition for personal revenge, been on the decrease?

What is the language of our newspapers on this subject? Do they say that duels, murders, riots, robberies, assassinations, mobs, and such like, are becoming rarities? What is the voice of our legislative records? Have our legislators been engaged of late in abridging the extent and mitigating the severity of the criminal code? Why this common movement in one part of our country to suppress the barbarous practice of carrying concealed weapons? and whence the general effort to protect the lives of citizens from fashionable manslaughter? What say the dockets of our courts, and the number and condition of our almshouses, jails, and penitentiaries?

Let us view the subject as we may, the picture is anything but agreeable, the prospect anything but pleasing; and yet, there never was a time when half the attempt was made to diffuse the means of education. How is this to be accounted for? Here is a new question for the advocate of social improvement. It is easily answered however. There is not the slightest room to doubt that it is owing, not to the want of efficacy in education properly so called, but to almost univer-

sal *miseducation*. It is the natural and unavoidable result of sundering moral from intellectual culture. There is nothing in the knowledge that two and two are four—that “a verb is a word which signifies to be, to do, or to suffer;” and that Paris is the capital of France; which is calculated to prepare our youth for becoming virtuous and pious men, good neighbours, and orderly citizens; and yet this is about as near as most of our schools, (I speak with reference to the nation at large,) approach to an attempt to make them such. We should not be surprised that society does not become virtuous by miracle. Means are as necessary to ends in the moral, as in the physical world. The poet announces no discovery when he says that the tree retains the inclination of the scion. The philosophers of Greece and Rome understood full well the dependent relation that exists between youthful training and subsequent character. They learned this from their fathers, and they again from theirs. The Persians set an example worthy of imitation, to a great extent, by modern Christians. In short, all history, and all experience, together with the universal sentiments of mankind, proclaim, that if we would have our children turn out virtuous and useful men and women, we must train them up from infancy in the way that they should go: and yet it is strange, inexplicably strange on ordinary principles! whilst we admit all this to be true, we act as if we believed it false. Ev-

every one asserts the necessity of popular virtue to the stability of our institutions, and of correct education to popular virtue. The usual phraseology on this subject has been repeated till it has almost degenerated into cant ; yet where are the statesmen, the philanthropists, or the Christian ministers, who are doing justice to their convictions in regard to it ?

It is obvious that our sentiments on this subject are far ahead of our practice. It must be admitted, some slight approximation to the discharge of duty in this respect has been made *in our colleges*. This, however, is travelling but an inch, where there is before us a journey of leagues. Beside, it is beginning the journey at the wrong end ; and if it were not, it is stopping at the very threshold of the understanding. It is providing for units, whilst as many thousands are neglected. What is the number of students in our colleges, to the numbers in the various subordinate schools ? And what has been done towards christianizing education in these receptacles of the mass of mind in our country ? There are in all the colleges in the Union less than *six thousand* undergraduates ; whilst the number of pupils, who are or ought to be assembled in the different grades of preparatory schools, is not far short of *four millions*.

Whence, then, the partiality manifested towards the inmates of the higher institutions ? The sentiment is rapidly growing to practical maturity,

that every college should be regarded as a spiritual charge. But where shall we find an apology for the astounding fact, that scarcely the first step has yet been taken towards a systematic effort at incorporating the religion of the country, with the course pursued in those intellectual nurseries in which the minds of the millions of our juvenile population are instructed?

As a nation, then, we are guilty of the flagrant inconsistency of deeming that essential, which we take no pains to supply. We are chargeable with the absurdity of pronouncing indispensable, what we do habitually dispense with. Which of the various public school systems established, or projected in the United States, has practically recognised the connexion between popular virtue, and national prosperity? Or, which of them has made appropriate and competent provision for the moral as well as the intellectual culture of the rising generation? And can we reasonably wonder that society should be harrassed with grievous moral evils, when the moral and religious culture of the young is systematically slighted? It is a solemn truth, fraught with great responsibility to communities as well as parents, that (as has been already intimated) to neglect the moral education of a child is equivalent to miseducating it; that to fail to bring and keep it under good influences, is to abandon it to bad.

It is a well established principle, that the omis-



sion of duty brings guilt as really as the commission of sin. If a parent from laziness, or indifference, cause a child to die of hunger or of cold, he is as really guilty as if he had brought about its death by poison or deadly blows. The application of this is obvious. Were a parent, for the sake of pecuniary profit, to train a child to steal, no one could doubt the propriety of his being called to answer for it, both to God and man. But what is there to change the nature of the responsibility, or the weight of guilt, when the child, according to an obvious law of our nature, betakes itself to stealing in consequence of the neglect of the parent to give it a proper education? Is it not notoriously true that to fail to inspire children with sentiments of justice, and with respect for the rights of others is, for the most part, virtually to train them up for theft and robbery? In order to contract bad habits, it is only necessary that we abstain from strenuous and persevering efforts to cherish good ones.

The only modifying consideration as to the guilt incurred in such a case, is the amount of ability or inability, on the part of the parent, to bestow a right education on his children. In the case of a Hottentot, for instance, the total want of this would greatly palliate, if it did not entirely excuse the fault of the omission. The inspired volume teaches us, that a man shall be judged according to his means and opportunities. But in a

civilized and Christian country, few parents can plead this excuse; *society, never*. It is quite possible an individual parent may, from sickness, death, or some other uncontrollable circumstances, fail to give his children a proper education; but society never dies — society may always have means and opportunities; for its neglect therefore there is no possible apology.

There is scarcely a greater or more pernicious error among the many complained of as belonging to the education of our day, than that which is evinced by the fact, that the province of the instructor of youth is confined, almost exclusively, to intellectual culture. That children are moral and religious beings, having hearts as well as heads, affections as well as understandings, seems to be almost totally forgotten in the school-room.

Were it not for the instructive and warning voice of history on the subject, we should be tempted to regard the sentiment which correctly declares the formation of character to be the primary object of education, as one of the novel devices of this inventive age. But the works of Xenophen and Plato, of Cicero, Seneca, and Quintilian, deny to us the credit of the discovery; exhibiting the fact that Romans, Grecians, and even Persians, made familiar application of the truth; and that *Christians* of the present day, after the lapse of many centuries of deadness to its impor-

tance, are but endeavoring to *reinstall* a sentiment of *heathen* origin.

The consistent practice of the follower of the False Prophet too, should raise a blush upon the cheek of the disciple of the Saviour. The Koran is the guide, the instrument, the sum of the education of Mahomedan children; whilst the Bible, if introduced at all into Christian schools, is wielded with so little skill and earnestness, as to have raised a doubt whether the attempt is not productive of more harm than good.

We cannot however be too careful, whilst insisting upon reform in this respect, that we stop not short of the proper point. Mere moral instruction of his offspring, or that which relates to "loving our neighbour as ourselves," should never satisfy the conscience of a Christian parent, who acknowledges the "first and great commandment" to be, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Children are religious beings; that is, they have consciences and affections peculiarly susceptible of religious impressions; and the failure to treat them as such, can only be regarded as an act of criminal, not to say unpardonable infidelity. Children are immortal beings; and any scheme of education which comes short of a practical recognition of this truth, overlooks the most important, solemn, and interesting relation they sustain.

However it might outstretch the popular sentiment, I know not that it would be going further than the principles now stated logically demand, to assert, that wherever practicable, the instructors of youth should be none other than pious men. Once admit the fact that the most important object of education is the culture of the heart, and with the Bible as the instrument; and how can others be any thing else than blind leaders of the blind? The teacher is a partial substitute for the parent; an auxiliary in the discharge of the most solemn duty imposed upon him by Providence. As such, he undertakes the same task, assumes the same responsibilities; nor can he be released from the obligation to bestow religious instruction in this character, until the following and similar passages shall, by Divine command, have been obliterated from the sacred volume: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou *shalt teach them diligently unto thy children*, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

Not only should the instructor of youth be himself a Christian in heart and practice, but he should *avowedly* endeavour to make his pupils such. He should aim, not only at instruction of the understanding, but impression of the heart. He should faithfully use *every day in the school-room*, all the

variety of means which the clergyman employs from the pulpit on the Sabbath. He should use them too in the same spirit ; for the same purposes ; and with the same supplicating dependence on the Divine aid and blessing. He should address himself to the tender sensibilities of childhood, by means of the mild and melting considerations with which the gospel abounds ; and he should make close and specific appeals to their consciences ; remembering, that the sense of moral obligation is in children peculiarly delicate and acute. The meaning of the expressions "ought," and "ought not," is perfectly comprehended by them. There are in reality, and to the unsophisticated mind of childhood, no simpler words in our language. Adults create difficulty in regard to them, by adventurous speculation. Their signification is so plain, as only to be obscured by any attempts at explanation. Children, as well as those of riper years, *feel* that they are accountable. They need not that it should be proved to them. The sentiment of implicit obedience to rightful authority, is one, of whose propriety their judgements are perfectly satisfied ; and if their feelings do not practically acquiesce in its demands, it is owing, in a good degree, to the injudicious management to which they have been subjected.

There are no motives for the government of children, whether at home or at school, so cogent,

and at the same time so salutary in their operation, as those which appeal directly to their sense of duty. If judiciously administered, and with proper reliance on the blessing of God, they may supersede the employment of force, of emulation, and of all other expedients, whose propriety is questionable.

If the author may be permitted to refer to his own practice and experience, for the purpose of expressing his views more clearly upon this subject, he would state, that in his prospectus of a school established several years ago in Louisville, Ky., there is the following sentence: "I deem it due to candour to specify, that I consider moral education, or that which aims at the formation of character, as of paramount importance; and that in executing this sentiment, the Bible will be regarded and used as an ultimate, sufficient, and authoritative standard; whose promises and precepts, containing an expression of the will of God, furnish at once the motives, the reasons, and the rules of human duty." In accordance with this avowal, I devoted a full hour, the first of every day, to religious exercises. My wish was, to embrace within this time all the elements of an act of social worship. Accordingly, each pupil being furnished with a Bible and a Prayer-book, we began with some responsive exercises from the latter; then proceeded colloquially with the Bible lesson; next, sang; (in which all joined, music be-

ing made a regular branch of instruction,) and concluded with prayer.

As would naturally be supposed, the principal part of the hour was taken up with the study of the Bible. The whole school was thus virtually resolved into a Bible Class ; and my pupils were accustomed to regard the precepts of the sacred volume, as the guide of their daily conduct. To it we repaired for our principles, our motives, our rules of life. They were directed to look upon it too, as containing the code of laws for the school, which both teachers and pupils were under a common and equal obligation to obey ; and I take delight in bearing my feeble testimony in favour of the efficacy and sufficiency of the moral influences derived from this source. I used no other in the government of my school ; and every day's experience but strengthened the conviction that I needed no other.

Here, however, I deem it very important to specify, that I found every thing depend upon my basing all upon the footing of *duty*. *God hath spoken*, and therefore *we are bound to listen*, is a proposition which arrests the conscience of a child more readily by far than that of an adult ; and the preacher in the pulpit, may just as reasonably expect success and God's blessing in moderating this requirement, as the teacher in the school-room. The man is but *an expansion* of the boy ; the same, not a different being ; and I am fully

persuaded, that the principles and motives by which religion requires that we regulate our feelings and conduct in after life, are precisely those to which we should be accustomed by incessant practice, from the earliest dawn of reason. In this consists more than half, and that the better half of education.

And why may not these principles be carried out in every school in our country? I confess I see no reason whatever to the contrary, but that Christians, and especially *ministers of the gospel*, *do not will it*. That the community is ready to welcome such a course, at least in some instances; (and I now allude to a region which by public fame is not the most religious,) I bear my grateful testimony. I never experienced the slightest difficulty, nor heard the first objection to my practice in this respect. - It is a curious and interesting fact, that whatever may be their own sentiments and feelings in regard to religion, most men wish their own children, and the children of the community at large, to be brought up under the influence of pious principles. The painful experience of many men of wealth convinces them, that nothing can save their sons from becoming spend-thrifts and vagabonds, but a religious education; and the alarming tendency to popular lawlessness, which manifests itself, as readily in those regions where public schools have done the most, as in those where they have not yet taken root, is rap-



idly undermining that self-complacent confidence, (which hitherto has characterized us as a nation,) in intelligence alone, as a sufficient safeguard of our social institutions.

Should it be objected here, that however desirable the application of these principles for the purposes of national education, we have not teachers fitted by professional training to carry them into effect; then why not educate them for their business, as we educate physicians, lawyers, and mechanics? Never did the eye of Heaven take cognizance of a more glaring and pernicious error than that which not only tolerates, but constrains the commission of the intellectual and moral culture of the immortal mind to untrained novices. Its parallel is not to be found in the annals of human folly; and, certainly, if we look at consequences, its equal does not exist in the records of human misfortune. The reasoning by which its absurdity is exposed, need not advance one step beyond the employment of axioms. How can we expect good work without good workmen? And how can these exist without appropriate education?

But it is not conviction, so much as impression on this subject, that society stands in need of. Most solemnly therefore would I appeal to the consciences of Christians, and of Christian ministers, for the prompt and thorough rectification of this enormous evil. On them devolves the weighty

responsibility of awakening and enlightening public sentiment on this momentous subject; and through its agency, essential in this country, of achieving a reform in national education, which in Europe has been effected in some instances by the application of arbitrary power.

Christian parents! remember you are God's stewards; and that children are the most important trust which Heaven has committed to your care. How then can you reconcile it to yourselves to bring them up in even partial forgetfulness of their relation to another world? And how can you continue to delegate their education to a class of men, in whom professional fidelity and skill cannot reasonably be expected, because from the very nature of the case, they are impracticable?

Fathers and brethren of the ministry! let us awake to a sense of the weighty obligation that devolves upon us from the peculiar nature of our political institutions. Being a Christian people, let us resolve that we will have a Christian education for our offspring. Let Mohammedan consistency shame us into the performance of our duty in this particular. Let us henceforth inscribe upon the doorposts of our school-houses, as well as upon the lintels of the sanctuary, "Holiness to the Lord." Let us, with united heart and voice, proclaim it to our fellow-citizens throughout the nation; (and let us do it with the candour and composure that wait on real

firmness;) that however we may be divided upon other points, on this we know no discord of feeling or opinion — that as worshippers of a common Father; as disciples of the same Redeemer; we are firmly resolved to rally round the Bible they have given us, as the only moral guide of our offspring — that whatever others may do, we are determined to “train up ours in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” — and that if they would have us continue to educate *their* children, *they must consent that we shall do it upon Christian principles.*

It is possible, some may apprehend, that by bestowing upon the moral part of our nature the amount of attention recommended, the proper cultivation of the intellectual would be neglected; that by devoting so much study to the Bible, the sciences and various other branches of ordinary knowledge would be slighted. But for such a fear there is less than the shadow of occasion. The culture of the moral faculties, so far from being incompatible with the cultivation of the intellectual, not only favours, but is essential to its full achievement. There is a stern necessity imposed by Providence, which should command our admiration and our thanks, that to perfect one part of our spiritual nature, we must improve the whole. A harmoniously educated head and heart are the columns on which the edifice of human character and greatness, whether individual or

social, rests; and if either be defective, the entire fabric is in danger.

One of the most comprehensive reasons why we have so signally failed in the cultivation of the head, is, that we have neglected to take along with it the cultivation of the heart. It may appear like superstition to such as deny themselves the inestimable benefits flowing from the practice of prayer; but with such as have experienced its advantages, the assertion will gain a hearty credence, that the understanding is never in a better condition to take clear, unbiassed, safe, and ample views of truth, than in those calm and hallowed moments, when the passions have been lulled; the spirits tranquilized, the affections purified, and the purpose of amendment strengthened by communion with one's Maker. This throws the mind into a state the most favourable which can be imagined, for an impartial consideration of evidence.

Nothing is more conducive to a healthy condition of the intellectual powers, than to keep the heart habitually under the influence of worthy feelings. Philosophy herself is obliged to attest this, when she states the manner in which the passions impose on the understanding, and goes into a specification of those various "idols" that mislead and warp the judgement. To these, her theory and history both, ascribe the origin of most of the errors which pervade society; and sanction the opinion, that the reason why the truth is

so little known, is not because it is hard to be discovered, but because mankind are led astray by the force of that mis-education which consists in the neglect of moral culture.

That the education of the moral faculties is essential to the full developement of the intellectual, is a truth whose general acknowledgement and application are destined to exert a powerful influence in favour of the best interests of the human family. It is truly animating to see it apparently *originating* with so many different men of eminent wisdom, and proclaimed as one of the most important facts connected with intellectual and moral science. This is one of the many instances in which an important truth simultaneously suggests itself to different individuals, and which almost make us fancy that when a new idea of moment to the happiness of man is to be introduced on earth, a beneficent angel is despatched to drop it into the minds of persons widely separated from each other. It is delightful also to perceive that systems which by some are regarded as antagonists, harmonize completely on this point. Modern philosophy and the Christian Religion conspire to enforce the truth, that education should have reference to the entire being; and pre-eminently that in all its arrangements it should acknowledge the supremacy of the moral powers.

For these and other reasons which might be stated, it is the sacred duty of all the friends of

religion, of their country, and of man, to contend with uncompromising earnestness for the re-union of intellectual and moral education.

This union is equally essential for the safety and well-being of the State and of the Church. May they not be too tardy in making the discovery ! God grant that the conviction may not come too late to be savingly applied ! The providence of God is evidently calling our attention as a people to the necessity of this association, reminding us of our neglect, and admonishing us in the most solemn manner of our danger and our duty. The occurrence at the same juncture, of excesses in religion from want of intellectual ballast, and of popular disregard of law from want of religious principle, is calculated not only to bring us to reflection, but to show us our error. It were difficult to tell which is in the most critical condition, the Government or the Church. It is evident they are both alarmed, not only for their prosperity, but for their future safety. Hitherto they seem to have acted under the assumption that their interests were not coincident, if not at variance. They appear to have been trying opposite experiments ; the Church by her neglect of *general* education, endeavouring to dispense with popular intelligence ; and the Government, with religion.

I humbly trust, however, they are about to perceive their mistake. God in his providence is kindly showing us the futility of attempting to

sever things which in their very nature are inseparable. He has joined them together by indissoluble ties, and is allowing our embarrassing experience to teach us that what God has joined together, man cannot with impunity even attempt to put asunder.

In originally severing the connexion of church and state, there appears to have been an attempt to carry the dissolution further than their outward union. In the general breaking up at the period of our revolution, it would seem as if there had been a formal division of the faculties of the soul; the church, taking the heart; and the state, the head.

It does not militate against this view, that the church has had the guardianship of education in our colleges; and that government has given its authoritative sanction to the Christian Sabbath, and has guarantied protection to the rights of conscience. It is evident that the latter has taken the form without the spirit, the body without the soul; the mere ceremonies and outward institutions of religion without its vital energy and substance; and that the former has acted as though she thought the province of education did not reach to the formation of character; as if its business were altogether foreign from the cultivation of the moral powers. Though not proceeding to the atheistical extent of the French revolutionists, yet whatever may have been the

opinions and solemn warnings of such men as Washington to the contrary, our governments have practically demanded for themselves intelligence alone ; and the church, by one of the strangest and most fatal inconsistencies to be found in her entire history, has consented in the main, to conduct the education of the country with faithful reference to this unnatural and irreligious separation. It cannot be disputed that the education of the youth of our country at large, has been anything but Christian ; that it has been addressed to the understanding almost to the total neglect of the will and the affections.

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#### SECTION IV.

Protest of Dr. Rush against the exclusion of the Bible from schools.—Cousin's views of the importance of Religious Education.

IN presenting the views detailed in the preceding sections, the author lays no claim whatever to originality. They are at present entertained by thousands, having been transmitted to us by the patriots and Christians of another generation. His only object is to "stir up the minds of others by way of remembrance," and to aid in exciting a *practical* attention to truths, about which, although their importance is passively admitted, there prevails an unfortunate, culpable, and alarming indifference in this Christian country.



As long ago as 1791, the venerable Dr. Rush foresaw the moral evils which now menace our institutions; and he considered them contingent on our neglect of the religious education of our children. Convinced, with Washington, that for her future welfare, no less than for her then recent deliverance, our country was essentially dependent on the favour of the Governor of the universe, he asserted the duty and the policy of having the children of the nation educated in his fear. His discerning mind perceived that there was danger, lest in severing the outward connexion of church and state, the process of political reform should banish the *spirit* of religion also from our governments. He therefore raised his voice, and employed his pen, to assert the province of the Bible in the work of education, and to protest against its banishment from our elementary schools.

In a pamphlet entitled "a defence of the Bible as a school book," he remarks — "In contemplating the political institutions of the United States, I lament that we waste so much time and money in punishing crimes, and take so little pains to prevent them. We profess to be republicans, *and yet we neglect the only means of establishing and perpetuating our republican forms of government, that is, the universal education of our youth in the principles of Christianity, by means of the Bible*; for this Divine book, above all others, favours that equality among mankind — that respect

for just laws, and all those sober and frugal virtues which constitute the soul of republicanism.

“The present fashionable practice of rejecting the Bible from our schools, I suspect has originated with the deists. *They discover great ingenuity in this new mode of attacking Christianity.* If they proceed in it, they will do more in half a century, in extirpating our religion, than Bolingbroke or Voltaire could have effected in a thousand years. I am not writing to this class of people. *I wish only to alter the opinions and conduct of those lukewarm or superstitious Christians, who have been misled by the deists on the subject.* On the ground of the good old custom of using the Bible as a school book, it becomes us to entrench our religion.”

It is with no ordinary satisfaction I find myself able to corroborate the views which have been advanced in this chapter, by adding to the authority of Dr. Rush, that of the celebrated Victor Cousin. It will be perceived, by the following extracts from his “Report on the State of Public Instruction in Prussia,” that in every position of moment I am signally sustained by the views of this distinguished statesman and philanthropist. For instance, he asserts with singular boldness, the necessity of making popular instruction moral, and even religious; declaring it to be of vital moment, that the education of the country should be made thoroughly Christian. He even goes much further than I have done, affirming that if govern-

ment order it otherwise, *the clergy ought to oppose them!* He seems dēeply impressed with the importance of piety in schoolmasters, and urges the expediency of making it a professional requisite. The Bible, too, he declares to be the great instrument of religious instruction, and moral culture; and he insists with manly eloquence, upon the duty and policy of frankness in expressing our sentiments upon such subjects.

In giving his opinion of the “authority to be employed” in executing a system of national education, he remarks:—“After the administrative authorities, it is unquestionably the clergy who ought to occupy the most important place in the business of popular education. We must have the clergy; we must neglect nothing to bring them into the path toward which every thing urges them to turn—both their obvious interest, and their sacred calling, and the ancient services which their order rendered to the cause of civilization in Europe. But if we wish to have the clergy allied with us in the business of popular instruction, *that instruction must not be stripped of morals and religion; for then indeed it would become the duty of the clergy to oppose it, and they would have the sympathy of all virtuous men, of all good fathers of families, and even of the mass of the people, on their side.*

“Thank God, sir, you are too enlightened a statesman to think that true popular instruction

*can exist without moral education, popular morality without religion, or popular religion without a church. Christianity ought to be the basis of the instruction of the people ; we must not flinch from an open profession of this maxim ; it is no less politic than it is honest. We baptize our children, and bring them up in the Christian faith, and in the bosom of the church ; in after life, age, reflection, the breath of human opinions modify their early impressions ; but it is good that these impressions should have been made by Christianity. Popular education ought therefore to be religious, that is to say, Christian ; for I repeat it, there is no such thing as religion in general : in Europe, and in our day, religion means Christianity. Let our popular schools then be Christian ; let them be so entirely and earnestly.” — p. 124, 126.*

Again at page 228, he proceeds : — “ Without neglecting physical science and the knowledge applicable to the arts of life, we must make moral science, which is of far higher importance, our main object. The mind and the character are what a true master ought above all to fashion. We must lay the foundations of moral life in the souls of our young masters, and therefore we must place religious instruction, *that is, to speak distinctly, Christian instruction, in the first ranks in the education in our normal schools.* I would particularly urge this point, sir, *which is the most important and the most delicate of all,*

“The popular schools of a nation, ought to be imbued with the religious spirit of that nation. Now, without going into the question of diversities of doctrine, is Christianity, or is it not the religion of the people of France? It cannot be denied that it is. I ask, then, is it our object to respect the religion of the people, or to destroy it? If we mean to set about destroying it, then I allow, we ought by no means to have it taught in the people's schools. But if the object we propose to ourselves is totally different, we must teach our children that religion which civilized our fathers; that religion, whose liberal spirit prepared and can alone sustain, all the great institutions of modern times.

“We must also permit the clergy to fulfil their first duty—the superintendence of religious instruction. But in order to stand the test of this superintendence with honour, *the schoolmaster* must be able to give adequate religious instruction. The less we desire our schools to be ecclesiastical, the more ought they to be Christian. It necessarily follows that there must be a course of special religious instruction in our normal schools. *Religion is, in my eyes, the best, perhaps the only, basis of popular education.* I know something of Europe, and never have I seen good schools where the spirit of Christian charity was wanting. Primary instruction flourishes in three countries, Holland, Germany, and Scotland—in all it is profoundly religious.

“The more I think of all this, sir; the more I look at the schools in this country; the more I talk with the directors of normal schools, and counselors of the ministers,—the more I am strengthened in the conviction that we must make any efforts or any sacrifices to come to a good understanding with the clergy, on the subject of popular education, and to constitute religion a special and very carefully taught branch of instruction, in our primary normal schools.

“I am not ignorant, sir, that this advice will grate on the ears of many persons, and that I shall be thought extremely *dévot* at Paris. Yet it is not from Rome, but from Berlin that I address you. The man who holds this language to you is a philosopher, formerly disliked and even persecuted by the priesthood; but this philosopher has a mind too little affected by the recollection of his own insults, and is too well acquainted with human nature and with history not to regard religion as an indestructible power; genuine Christianity, as a means of civilization for the people, and a necessary support for those on whom society imposes irksome and burdensome duties, without the slightest prospect of fortune, without the least gratification of self-love.”

There is something more than magnanimity, there is a moral sublimity in the character of such a man as Cousin, when we take into consideration the people to whom he speaks, and the circum-

stances under which he proclaims such sentiments. If, in perusing my humble reasoning, the reader have been ready to utter the charge of fanaticism, or extravagance, he will certainly retract it when he reflects upon the statements of the French philanthropist. Surely, that American is behind the age, and cannot be imbued with the genuine spirit of his institutions, who shall complain of the Court of France, as being too religious in its sentiments.

And only think of it :—*a French Philosopher* setting an example to *American Christians, and even Clergymen* !—uttering with unflinching frankness, and to a “nation of infidels,” sentiments which are but being broached in this land of liberty and Bibles ; and that, with a timid caution, more worthy of another cause, and more becoming the disciples of another master than of Him, whose crowning example was, to lay down his life for his principles. If there be wisdom in the maxim which enjoins upon us to learn even from an enemy ; surely, heedlessness were sinful, when our duty is made known to us from such a source as this.

O, shame on our cowardly remissness ! Christian brethren ; if for a moment longer we hesitate to think and speak, and act, as duty bids us,—let us at once set out upon a pilgrimage to the Court of Versailles, to have our Christianity quickened.

### **CHAPTER III.**

#### **OF THE ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF A SYSTEM OF NATIONAL EDUCATION.**

**THE** questions proposed in the commencement of this volume are,

What kind and amount of education do the circumstances of society in the United States require all its members should receive ?

What, and how much, is every child, irrespectively of the character or condition of its parents, entitled to claim, and government consequently bound to give ? and

What arrangements had best be made for the purpose of complying with this requirement, of meeting these claims, and of discharging this obligation ?

These questions, (the two first of which in reality come to one and the same thing, since the kind and amount of education which society is essentially interested each individual shall possess, are precisely what he has a right to claim, and government is under obligation to bestow,) cover the whole ground of the subject of national education. This, in accordance with the foregoing queries, naturally divides



itself into two departments ; the first, relating to the character of the elementary education to be given ; and the second, to the provision and application of means. I propose to treat of both of these in the present chapter ; or, in other words, to the best of my ability, to answer the inquiry, **WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF A SYSTEM OF NATIONAL EDUCATION, SUITED TO THE UNITED STATES ?**

In executing this task, I have so constructed my remarks as to answer another very important purpose at the same time, viz: that of pointing out the dependent relation which wise and effective legislation on this subject sustains to public sentiment. The history of legislative efforts for the spread of education, clearly shows that this has been too much overlooked, and that the advancement of the cause has been retarded by the people being encouraged to depend too much upon their governments, while, in reality, their governments have been waiting for their instigation.

There is no inference more deducible from the experience of our eastern states in regard to common schools, than the proposition, that nothing whatever can be achieved by legislation, unless the people be previously or simultaneously interested. It is to public sentiment, much more than to their legislatures, that the New-England States are indebted for their signal attention to education. That public sentiment, the present generation of

their inhabitants has inherited ; and a more valuable legacy could not have been bequeathed them by their fathers. It was started and cherished by the religion of the Puritans. In a majority of the states, however, it has to be created ; for it does not exist, and its agency is indispensable. Without its aid, legislation is altogether powerless. What can a republican government accomplish on any subject, without the hearty concurrence of the people ? It may pass laws, and devise the most plausible, and to appearance, practicable schemes ; but unless a popular interest be excited in their favour, all will be to no purpose. Supposing the legislature stands in need of funds to carry out its plans, how are they to be supplied unless the people furnish them ? — By taxation ? But what if the people will not consent ? and they will not consent, unless they first be prepossessed in favour of the object, for which the funds thus raised are to be expended. Even supposing, however, that with reference to a scheme of education, the funds are furnished, and their plan arranged ; — who are to put it into operation ? The ordinary executive officers ? It is impossible for any legislative body in this country, to act independently of local interest in such a case. The *despotic power* of a worthy Prussian Monarch may dispense with this ; because, when out of the royal treasury he has provided houses, books, and teachers ; he may, by the imposition of fines, or by other compulsory

measures, coerce the education of the children of his peasantry. But in a free government, where neighbourhood influence is to be exerted, legislation is mere paper work, unless neighbourhood interest be first awakened.

This will account for the failure of many laudable governmental efforts for the benefit of education. Their measures, however wise and practicable in themselves, did not reach the people; because, not having emanated from the people; they were not seconded, sustained, and executed by the people.

For the sake of illustration, I may mention, that when on a visit to New-England for the purpose of examining her common school systems, being in Massachusetts, I was attracted to the towns of Worcester and Springfield, by the distant reputation of their schools; and I felt at no loss to account for their superior excellence, on being made acquainted with two or three intelligent, patriotic gentlemen, who spared no pains to awaken the interest of the people to the education of their children; enforced with considerable rigour the statute requiring the examination of instructors; assisted and encouraged the teachers by advice and frequent visits; and paid particular attention to procuring the composition and distribution of the best school books.

It is evident, then, that when the people are indifferent to any object, legislatures cannot and

dare not move towards its accomplishment ; and painful and invidious as the task may be, I deem it necessary to prove, in the course of the remarks relating particularly to the immediate subject of this chapter, that the people of the United States in general, certainly a majority of them, are not prepared to welcome, or even to *tolerate*, (I am sure the expression is not too strong,) a proper scheme of national education.

For example, — in perhaps the larger part of the Union, the people are not prepared to admit the essential principle which, for more than two hundred years, has been assumed in England as the basis of their common school systems, viz : the doctrine of “*ad valorem contribution*,” — the right and *duty* of government to tax the people according to their means, for the education of their children. They have yet to be familiarized with the idea, *to be reasoned into a conviction of its truth* ; and it is rare a legislature can be found possessing sufficient disinterestedness or moral firmness, to press the delicate subject of taxation beyond the well ascertained wishes of their constituents. And what good if they did ? Their acts, in such event, would only be reversed with vengeance on themselves.

This being the case, a recognition of the fact when treating of the elements of a scheme of national education with a practical aim, is obviously important ; since it immediately suggests

the necessity of the preliminary work of preparing the public mind, before we can expect any thing of value from our legislatures. From the peculiar nature of our institutions, this will not be accomplished by our legislative bodies themselves, for they always *follow* public sentiment ; and I shall endeavour to show in the sequel, that it devolves as a solemn duty, and an enviable privilege, in a pre-eminent degree, upon the clergy.

The essential features in a system of national education suited to the United States, I consider to be seven ; as expressed in the following propositions :

1. A system of national education suited to the United States, must aim, above all things, to impress a virtuous character upon the rising generation, and by means of the Bible as the instrument.

2. In educating the intellectual faculties, it should be guided, (with reference both to methods of practice, and the information to be communicated,) by the laws of mind, and the future wants of the individual ; and not, as is generally the case, by a too subservient and blind regard to usage.

3. It must make such arrangements as will ensure the attendance at school, of every child of the proper age.

4. It must cause them to continue at school for a period of seven years.

5. It must establish seminaries for the professional education of a sufficient number of teachers,

6. It must provide means for their accommodation and comfortable support ; and, .

7. For the supervision and general execution of its plans, it must appoint wise and energetic superintendents.

These I regard as the indispensable elements of a system of public education adapted to our wants. But strange to tell, there is but one country in the world, in which they have existence, and that is under the government of an arbitrary monarch. They are just as necessary, however, in the United States as they are in Prussia ; and even more so. But where, I ask with mortification,—with wounded pride as a republican ; where is the state in our confederacy, that would sustain its legislature in the execution of such a system ? And yet, I repeat it, this is just such a system as is demanded by our political circumstances. Its beautiful symmetry would be marred by the omission of a single link. Its efficiency would be crippled, if not destroyed, by dispensing with any of its requisites.

Of the first of the features which I suppose to be essential to a public school system, viz : that which asserts the necessity of providing for the religious education of the young, I have already spoken ; having devoted to it a separate chapter because of its pre-eminent importance.

The question which relates to the best method of employing the Bible in schools has not been

dwelt upon, because I do not profess to understand it in regard to its practical details. I must confess, I have rather a prejudice against the employment of it as a mere reading book. There are so few children who, in learning to read, attend to the meaning, that there would seem to be danger lest the Bible, from the purely mechanical use made of it in such cases, should get to be regarded as a common book. I am inclined to think, children should be encouraged to use it precisely for the same ends for which they will have occasion to use it when they become men, viz: "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," and for no other purpose.

This view does not forbid the study of its style, its geography, its antiquities, &c., by the child, any more than by the theological student, or by the members of a Bible class. It decidedly encourages such research, for the sake of getting clear conceptions of its meaning. But, unquestionably, the great object for which children, no less than grown persons, should study the Bible is, that they may become good, in order that they may be happy and useful men and women.

A work which shall amount to an exact, judicious, and *specific* answer to the question which relates to the best method of employing the Bible in schools, and shall be fitted to serve as a help and guide to teachers in this respect, may be re-

garded as one of the greatest desiderata in practical education. The existence of such a work would do more than almost any thing else, to expedite the general introduction of the Bible into schools, to make it efficient in the great business of religious instruction, and to remove all doubt about the practicability of using it habitually without offending sectarian feelings.

It might reasonably be expected, that in treating of national education, the culture of the physical powers should not be overlooked. Nor is it by any means because I deem the subject unimportant, that it is not touched. So far from this, I regard it as a subject by itself; so extensive, that he alone is qualified to treat of it, who, to a knowledge of the science of mind, adds a very thorough acquaintance with that of physic. It begins with the all-important topic of marriage; (to the views of Professor Caldwell upon which, I would particularly solicit the attention of Christians and philanthropists,) and embraces those of nursing, diet, clothing, exercise, study, recreation, medical treatment, and many others of similar importance, about which the author is not qualified to write.

Another reason why this branch of the subject of education is not noticed is, that some of the most important practical questions in relation to it, that of the introduction of manual labour for example, seem as yet to be matters of experi-



ment ; and, also, because of an impression, that this is a department in which the hired teacher can do comparatively little ; that with reference to the article of exercise, the most we need do for children, is to afford them opportunity and leisure to gratify their instinctive love of action ; and that the whole subject, so far as it is desirable to make it an object of *systematic* attention, comes more appropriately within the province of the father and mother in the domestic circle, *aided and guided by the family physician*.

With these introductory remarks, I proceed to the immediate subjects of this section.

The second proposition relating to what are considered the essential elements of a system of national education suited to the United States, is, that "*In educating the intellectual faculties, it should be guided, (with reference both to methods of practice, and the information to be communicated,) by the laws of mind, and the future wants of the individual ; and not, as is generally the case, by a too subservient and blind regard to usage.*"

It always appeared to the author to be one of the most unfortunate mistakes in American education, that its legislative friends have directed their efforts exclusively to the multiplication of means, being totally regardless of the mode of using them. The diffusion, and not the improvement of education, seems to have been their only object. Their aim has been to increase as much

as possible the number of schools, with little or no practical regard to their character. Hence, the first, and by far the most important, in the whole series of measures requisite for the establishment of a public school system, has been habitually overlooked; I mean the education of teachers.

The business of education in the United States has been, and still is, conducted for the most part by apprentices; that is, by men who begin to learn the art they undertake to practise, only when they begin to teach; and who, from one cause or another, never do acquire a knowledge of it. I am aware that to this there are many very honourable exceptions. But I am equally aware, that the valuable teachers in our country have made themselves such, by their own exertions. For their professional respectability, they are not, in the least, indebted to legislative aid.

It follows as a necessary consequence of this neglect, that the art of education is in its infancy. Indeed, I know not that I should express myself much too strongly were I to say, that it has yet to be created, or discovered. We do know something, it is true, of the science of mind, and of the fundamental principles of education deducible from these; but of the details of their application, we know comparatively nothing.

The process of education, as at present managed, is little better than a mere matter of routine;

a blind, implicit, and irrational following of custom. We teach our children as we were taught before them ; and for no better reason, than that such was the practice of our predecessors. The proceedings of the school-room are conducted, pretty much, by the same criteria as those of the kitchen ; that is, by the help of recipes. The aid of science is, in both cases, equally repudiated ; and hence it follows, that we are in the habit of making scholars as a cook makes pies — “ *according to the directions.*” It rarely happens that we find a teacher who, in fixing upon his methods of instruction, takes counsel of the science of mental philosophy.

In most other departments of human labour, theory and practice, art and science, have been brought into co-operation. But in that of education, (of all, the most difficult, the most important,) they have been uniformly kept asunder. Every art has its science ; and the prosperity of the former, depends upon a judicious application of the well ascertained principles of the latter. Till recently, but little has been done in this way, and but little attempted, for the benefit of education. Hence it is, that we know so little about the business ; and that the art of education is pretty much in the condition now, that the art of physic was, when practice was monopolized by barbers. It consists of a settled course of practice, for which no better reason can be given than that it is usual.

With reference to "the information communicated" in our public schools, there is as great a want of proportion to the end to be subserved, as there is, of philosophical fitness, in the methods of instruction.

The responsible, and dignified position in which every man is placed by becoming a citizen of a republic where the right of suffrage is unrestricted, demands for him a species of intellectual developement, and an amount and variety of knowledge altogether superior to what is generally afforded. When I speak of national education, I of course mean American education; or such as is adapted to American institutions, wants, and character. This supplies a criterion, by which our legislators should determine the description of mental training and instruction to be given in all our school-houses without exception; even in the mud-daubed shantees of the remotest or poorest portions of the Union. In other words, wherever American citizens are to be formed, there, as a matter of course, American education should be given.

But what kind of education does this criterion require, it is asked?

That the children of the nation should be taught to read, and write, and cipher, answers almost universal custom! They should learn to read, that they may be able to peruse advertisements, and be certified of the true contents of bonds.

They should be taught to write, that they may be able to draft and sign receipts. And they ought to learn to cipher, that they may know the market value of their hay and corn, and keep from being cheated.

I mean by this simply to assert, (as I do with equal sincerity and mortification,) that the prevailing education in the United States is much more suitable for a mere dollar and cent people, whose "chief end" is "to gather pelf," than for a high-souled republican nation, that boasts of having restored man to the footing of his natural rights; and of having established an order of things, under which, every citizen may stand forth in all the dignity of a human being "redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled, by the genius of universal emancipation."

To collect materials for giving *a proper* answer to the question proposed, (so far, at least, as relates to intellectual education, the immediate subject of this chapter,) I would station myself beside "the stump" and the ballot-box, on the day of an election, and there learn the mental habits, and the information, requisite, to enable the farmers and mechanics, the principal voters of the nation, to distinguish the artful sophistry of the demagogue, from the manly logic of the friend of order and of the Constitution; and to choose, intelligently, between two candidates whose views of national policy may be as opposite as day and

night. I would then repair to our legislative halls; and hearing the yeomanry of the country uttering their wishes, and opinions, through their representative organs, I would inquire as to the kind of education that will fit them for doing so with wisdom and with safety. Thence I would go into the business walks of life, to ascertain what knowledge of things, and principles, is needed to facilitate the task of getting honestly a comfortable livelihood. In the social circle, next, I would learn the mental qualifications necessary to make recreation rational, and profitable, as well as pleasant. Then, by the domestic fireside, I would determine the amount of moral science requisite for a wise discharge of the duties of the father, the son, the brother, the relation, the neighbour, and the friend. And lastly; beneath the shadow of the sacred desk, I would form my views of the attainments which are essential to fit a man for being happy in the faithful discharge of all his duties upon earth, and to prepare him for the purer blessedness of Heaven.

Do I hear the cry of "impracticable," "visionary," and "utopian," sent forth on the perusal of these sentiments? I deny that the charge justly appertains to the sentiments themselves. These form an unavoidable inference from our political theory. If there be utopianism any where, it is to be found in our general and state constitutions. The framers of that venerable instrument, the

Declaration of Independence, are the Platos, and the Mores, against whom this inconsiderate cry is uttered. They have placed things on a footing which makes it indispensable that every one shall act intelligently, as well as virtuously, the part of a man, and of an American citizen; and if it be "impracticable" to prepare our children for so doing, we had better return as soon as possible to our allegiance to the mother country. A far worse fate may happen to us, if we persist in cherishing our grovelling and skeptical views respecting the education which should, and may be given, to all the voters and virtual legislators of our beloved country.

Our political circumstances imperatively demand a certain kind and amount of education for the people. Can we give it? I believe we can. But, then, in order to do so, we must provide a national system, which, "in educating the intellectual faculties," shall have a just regard to the philosophy of mind; shall prescribe more philosophical methods of instruction than prevail at present; and shall introduce into all our public schools, a course of studies suited in variety and extent to the wants and dignity of self-governing freemen. Before, however, we can indulge a hope of the existence of such a system, public opinion, (as is stated in the beginning of this chapter,) must undergo a thorough revolution. The people of the United States are not prepared for

a scheme of education that would do justice, either to the moral or intellectual faculties of their children. On this account, I grant that the *immediate* introduction of such a system would be impracticable. But this is far from admitting that when duty, interest, and parental love call for it so loudly, public opinion cannot be changed ; and, that a rational, and competent plan of national education cannot *ultimately* be established.\*

\* Having bestowed upon this branch of the subject of education as much attention as on any other ; I had prepared for this section, an extended statement of the principles on which the culture of the intellectual powers should be conducted ; with a minute description of the course of studies which, (in accordance with the criteria laid down,) ought to be pursued in all our national schools. But finding, (unexpectedly, and not until the publication had advanced thus far,) that its insertion would swell the work beyond a proper size, I have been obliged to omit it. If at any time hereafter it should seem desirable, I may possibly enlarge it, and put it forth in a volume by itself.



## SECTION II.

Parental love and duty do not cause parents to educate their children. — The state has a right to constrain them by its authority. — In Prussia, compulsion employed. — No moral or constitutional principle against it in this country — not proper here, simply because unnecessary and inexpedient. — Only way to ensure general attendance at the public schools, is by throwing a considerable share of the cost of education upon property, so that by the aid of a moderate tuition fee, the pay of teachers, and consequently the schools may be good, and yet the poor be able to send their children. — The people of the United States not prepared for the application of this doctrine. — Popular indifference the great obstacle to the improvement and spread of education. — Legislative action essential, yet must be preceded by great advance in public opinion; this to be effected by private efforts.

HAVING spoken in a general way of the nature and extent of the education which “the circumstances of society in the United States require *all its members* should receive;” which “every child is entitled to claim, and government is bound to give;” I proceed to the second great department of the subject of national education, which, (as is stated in one of the leading questions in the introduction,) relates to the “arrangements that had best be made for the purpose of complying with this requirement, of meeting these claims, and of discharging this obligation.” This covers the entire ground of the four remaining propositions that relate to the essential features of a system of national education, suited to the United States.

The third of these propositions, (which forms the subject of this section,) maintains, that our national system should include "such arrangements as will ensure the attendance at school of every child of the proper age."

By reasoning *a priori*, we should certainly arrive at the conclusion, that the education of the young is one of those interests which may be safely left to take care of itself. Parental love would seem to make all foreign instigation on this subject needless. From an abstract consideration of its nature, one would suppose that it would be just as necessary to pass laws requiring fathers and mothers to preserve the tender bodies of their children from freezing, or from starving, as to provide for the instruction and cultivation of their minds, by the enactment of legislative statutes. But the testimony of experience upon this point is altogether different. It is a lamentable fact, that the education of children is just one of those things about which parents are particularly careless; and as this is a matter of supreme importance to the state, an interest too precious to be liable to be neglected, she finds herself obliged to devise expedients for effecting by constraint, what fathers and mothers ought spontaneously to have attended to, at the bidding of the sacred instinct of parental love. Hence, one of the most important questions in the whole range of legisla-

tion on this subject is, how shall *all* parents be brought to send their children to school?

To effect this, various expedients have been employed in different countries: some have resorted directly to coercion. Strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that every subject of the King of Prussia, is not only obliged to contribute his proportion towards providing the means of education, but is actually compelled, if necessary, by the civil authority, to suffer his children to enjoy their advantages, for the period of seven years!! "No excuse, whatever, is admitted short of physical inability, or absolute idiocy. If the committee find that any child is negligent in his attendance, or any does not attend at all, the parent or guardian of such child is immediately visited; causes of delinquency are inquired into, and if the reasons are not satisfactory, he is admonished to do his duty, and if this admonition fails, he is again visited and admonished by the clergyman of the parish — and if he still continue negligent, he is punished by fines or by civil disabilities; and as a last resort where all other means have failed, his children are taken from under his care and educated by the local authorities."\*

Such is the strange exercise of power by a member of the holy alliance! And what republican, what philanthropist, can withhold from it his plau-

\* Stowe on Prussian education.

ditions? Would that all despots were tyrannical after this manner. Welcome absolute power, if it expend itself only in forcing blessings on the people. And surely, a republican government ought not to permit its citizens to envy the subjects of an arbitrary monarch. Assuredly, enlightened selfishness in a self-governing community, ought to achieve as much as benevolence in a despotism. Our kindness *to our children*, should not be surpassed by that of a military despot *toward his serfs*, a master *to his servants*.

When speaking of the Prussian system in this and other places, I by no means design to propose it as a model suited in all respects for our imitation. We want, in the United States, a system of education of our own, adapted to our peculiar circumstances; in short, we want *American* education. Still, as the fundamental features of a perfect system must be pretty much the same every where, and as the Prussian scheme is incomparably superior to any other in existence, I shall frequently refer to it for illustration.

With reference to *directly* coercive measures, it were almost useless to say it would not do to employ them in this country. Not, however, because it would be opposed to any moral or constitutional principle; but simply because it would be inexpedient and unnecessary. We have, *in reality, though indirectly*, resorted to coercive measures wherever a public school system of any

value has been established among us. It has never been found practicable to establish one without them. Do we not employ coercion when we tax a man against his will for the erection of a school-house and the support of a teacher, and then compel the payment of the amount by issuing an execution against his property? Is indirect taxation, (because the authority is disguised,) less the offspring of authority than that which is direct?

About the *abstract right* of government to compel the education of the children of the country, there cannot be a doubt. Is it not a much more noble way of *obliging* people to be orderly, than that of inflicting fines, and erecting jails and penitentiaries? Is it more offensive to employ coercion for the prevention, than for the cure of moral evils? There is at least one state in the Union, whose *statute-book* adopts the Prussian plan of imposing fines on parents who fail to send their children to school; and there is no other reason, than that it is inexpedient, to forbid a resort to it by all. Is not the government as really a parent in America as in Europe? And do the nature and strength of parental obligation depend on geography? Is it not an unalienable part of this obligation, to educate children even against their will if necessary? Have not governments too, everywhere, the right to provide for their own existence, safety, and healthy operation? and as it is admitted, that universal education is essen-

tial to these, pre-eminently so, in a republic, is it not peculiarly its duty, and consequently its right, to coerce, *if need be*, popular attention to it?

I fearlessly assume the position, that no man has a right in this country, (less by far here than any where else,) to leave his children uneducated. To train up his offspring in the paths of knowledge and virtue, is a debt he owes the state — a debt too, whose payment should be constrained by authority, if not made willingly. Every man demands for his children the rights and privileges of citizens. Let society, then, as it values its own existence, obeying the principle of self preservation, call upon him to remember, that right and duty are reciprocal and commensurate; that the enjoyment of the one should be contingent upon the discharge of the obligations of the other; and that voluntary ignorance amounts, in equity, to self-disfranchisement. Let the voice of that public sentiment, (which among us is omnipotent,) proclaim with authority, as stern and unflinching as ever accompanied the mandate of a military despot, that every man who expects for his offspring the immunities of citizenship, should qualify them by appropriate education for its duties. They have no right to participation on any other terms. A self-governing community is a voluntary association. As such, it has its terms of union, its articles of agreement; and every man who seeks admission within its pale, does so on the implied condition of conformity to their requirements.

Here, however, to guard against the possibility of misconception, it may not be amiss to state, that the only exercise of authority for the benefit of education which I consider necessary, and therefore proper, in the United States, is the imposition of a sufficient tax on property. By a sufficient tax, I mean a tax whose proceeds, added to the income from a moderate tuition fee, will make the public schools so good, by the employment of able teachers, that the rich shall not have occasion to establish private seminaries ; at the same time that the requisite additional cost of instruction, may be so small, that the poorest can send their children to school. This much is essential.

Our legislation on this point is far from being as bold and energetic as it should be, and hence the necessity of making a stronger statement of principles than otherwise might be required.

It does not throw the burden of supporting general education as much as it should, upon the rich ; or rather, it does not make *property* pay as large a proportion of the cost of public instruction as it ought to pay. If our governments possess the right of taxing property at all, they certainly have the right to make the tax sufficient to answer the end proposed. Once concede the principle, and the question of degree is settled of course. The rule by which it should be determined, I have already stated.

The object of taxation is two fold : it is designed

to act as a constraint upon the rich, and as an inducement to the poor, to educate their children in the public schools. A national system proposes to assemble the children of all, without discrimination, in the same schools, where they shall receive an education adapted to the genius and wants of our government. Now, if the tax on property be small, this object is inevitably defeated; for either the tuition fee will be very low, to accommodate the poor; and then the teacher's salary being trifling, and consequently the teacher and the school indifferent, the rich will establish superior private schools of their own; or if, for the sake of employing good teachers with a view to have good schools, the insufficiency of the income from taxation be made up by high fees for instruction, the poor are then debarred the privilege of educating their children. On the other hand, if the tax on property be high; the rich having paid so much towards their support, will of course send *their* children to the public schools; and the poor having the prospect of good and cheap education placed before them, (since, in this case, although the tuition fee be moderate, the salary of the teacher may yet be large,) will have the strongest inducement to send theirs. This being the case, our legislatures ought to impose a considerable, that is, a sufficient tax on property, without regard to the will of individual holders, and to employ executive authority for its collection. This is the



only way to "ensure the attendance at good public schools, of every child of the proper age."

There is nothing of extravagance in these positions. The chain of reasoning by which they are supported, consists of self-evident propositions; and yet, where is the legislature in the Union that dares advance and take the ground they bid it occupy? But although its *immediate* application is impracticable, still a great point is gained, by establishing the principle that the law ought to enforce the moral obligation of parents, and I may add, of society, to educate their children; for this being granted, the friends of education have only to secure the approbation of a majority of voters in any state, and the minority will be obliged, in perfect harmony with the spirit of our institutions, to conform to any financial arrangement they may choose to make through their representative agents in the legislature. It will be seen by the following quotation that the abstract principle, for which I contend, is distinctly asserted by the highest authorities upon the subject of elementary law. In Chitty's medical Jurisprudence, (first American edition, page 363,) I find the following language in regard to it:

"From these premises it results, that as happiness is increased in proportion to the extent of knowledge, and as the intellectual faculties may be strengthened and extended by mental exercise and attainments, not only in the individual, but

even hereditarily, therefore enlarged education should be encouraged, if not *enforced* by legislative enactments ; and though the natural affection of parents towards their children ought and might in general to induce them to afford adequate instruction ; yet, as there are lamentable instances to the contrary, the *law* ought to enforce the moral obligation. The court of chancery interferes only where the infant has property ; in which case the child may be taken even from the custody of his father, if he should be giving him an immoral or improper education, and out of the fund in court, proper education will be enforced. But in the present state of our law, unless the infant be the ward of that court, there can be no interference with parental authority ; and neither the common nor the statute law enforces more than food and maintenance, and it does not interfere with mental improvement. Sir Wm. Blackstone observed, that the municipal laws of most countries seem to be *defective in this point, by not constraining* the parent to bestow proper education upon his children ; perhaps considering that the almost necessarily consequent defects in his child would be so powerful a punishment upon the parent as of itself to deter him from the moral delinquency of omitting proper education."

The best school system in this country, that of New-York, makes its boast of having *enticed* the people into partial compliance with their obliga-

tions ; and in this particular, her example has, from necessity, been very properly imitated by all her sister states that have made any progress toward establishing a system of public education. But is it not humbling to reflect, that in a confederacy of proud and boastful republics, the people have to be *decoyed* into the discharge of their duties, even the sacred duty of educating their own children, and of providing for the perpetuity of their own institutions, by the mortifying stratagem of indirect or conditional taxation ? This in an individual parent — that a wealthy father, for example, should have to be bribed and lured into the education of his offspring, would subject him to the reproach and contempt of all around him. Upon what principle, then, are the guilt and ignominy lessened, when appertaining to whole communities of parents ? It is a national reproach, that most of our provisions for the spread of popular education, are the products of *disguised* taxation ; and that they are so, because the people are not sufficiently enlightened or liberal, to consent to have it otherwise. Oh ! tell it not in France — proclaim it not in Prussia — lest the son of the infidel, and the boor of the despot, flout at our political pretensions !

It is perfectly useless to disguise the fact, that the primary cause of all the defects complained of in education, and the source of all the evils that afflict our country in consequence of its imperfection, is *popular indifference*. *The people do not value education as they ought ;* and hence, their

public servants do not take more pains to provide it for them. No community in our country ever yet complained of a *persisting* want of subserviency in its government to the popular will. The guilt, if guilt there be, (and I see not how it can be disproved,) in not educating, and in miseducating our children, lies deeper than the mere formalities of legislation. Legislation is comparatively not to blame. It has done much; has done perhaps all it could. One thing is clear, it has gone quite as far as the people have given it liberty to go; and its future progress will be "*pari passu*," with the advance in the sentiments and wishes of our citizens. A substance is not more necessary to, nor definitive of a shadow, than is public opinion in this country, to governmental action. Let the people call for education, and they will soon have it. Let them rank it *among the necessities of life*, instead of making it prominent on the list of dispensables; let them be taught to think that they cannot possibly do without it; and they will speedily possess it both in quantity and quality, up to the full extent of their desires. Is it not, therefore, evident that it is the demand which needs to be stimulated? Let this become what it should be, and the supply may almost be left to take care of itself.

Here, then, is noble work for the patriot, the philanthropist, and the Christian. Let them promptly and zealously avail themselves of the eventful juncture that invites their interference; let them

boldly embark in the glorious enterprise that is before them, of stimulating, elevating, and reforming public sentiment in relation to education, and they will have rendered a service truly worthy of their professions ; they will have been the means of procuring indirectly to their country, blessings which, without their preparatory efforts, even the strong hand of government has it not in its power to dispense.

It must not be imagined, however, that I suppose legislative action can be dispensed with. Far from it. So far from it, I am forward to admit the truth of the assertion, that a system of general education has never yet existed, (and, so far as it is safe to reason of the future from the past,) never can exist, without governmental action. My only regret is, that legislation on the subject, being so much fettered, is not more energetic and productive.

That it is not so, I consider more its misfortune than its fault. It would soon do vastly more than it has been permitted to do, (for the way is perfectly clear in which it could do more,) if the people would but grant permission. The want of knowledge as to the best mode of procedure, forms no part of the hinderance. The experience of Europe, and of our older states, is so ample on this subject, both for the purpose of warning and direction, that the path of duty and expediency is as plain as day ; so plain, that for a legislature to wander from it in its efforts to improve, and to

increase the means of, education, it must strive to wander. Greater unanimity of opinion than exists among all writers and thinkers on the subject, in regard to the principles of action, and the best practical expedients, could scarcely be desired. Whether we repair for advice upon the subject to the inhabitants of the old world ; to England, Scotland, Denmark, Holland, France, to Prussia or to Germany in general ; or whether we take counsel of the intelligent in those sister states that for a couple of centuries have been familiar with legislative provisions for education, we receive but one harmonious answer from the whole. All, all concur in the opinion that every thing may be accomplished which legislation can accomplish, by first securing the professional education of instructors in sufficient numbers and of a proper character ; and then providing for their support, in good part, by a tax levied upon the entire property of the community.

In Continental Europe, these essential requisites are ordered by government without consulting the subject ; but in Great Britain, and in this country, the approbation of the people must be first solicited. Nothing can be done without their consent. This, among us, they are not as yet prepared to grant to the extent required. Consequently, legislation, being unsustained by public sentiment, cannot fail to remain comparatively unfruitful, till such a change shall have been

wrought in the views and feelings of the people, as may induce them to acquiesce in the execution of the above essential conditions; and this change, I reiterate, is in our country, the prerogative and hence the duty of the private citizen to produce, through the application of that moral machinery, by which we see such mighty revolutions wrought in the public mind on other subjects.

Instead, therefore, of proposing to call in social effort in lieu of legislation, I wish to see it heartily enlisted for the removal of that obstacle which effectually bars the exercise of legislative power. In short, I long to see the private patriot, the Christian, and the philanthropist, act on the great interests of education, not as substitutes, but as pioneers and aids to government.

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### SECTION III.

Fourth essential feature of a system of national education. — Its necessity obvious, but its execution impracticable on account of popular indifference. — Political necessity of a far superior kind of education to what is usually received by our citizens.

THE fourth feature which I have supposed to be essential in a system of national education suited to the United States is, that "It must cause the

children of the nation to continue at school for a period of seven years."

If the statement which has been made, of the kind and amount of education needed by American citizens be at all correct, it is self-evident that the time allotted by this proposition for its acquirement is far from being too much. And yet, so frightful is the interval between the theoretical, though stern demands of our political organization, and the description of education prevalent in the United States; so utterly unprepared are the majority of our fellow-citizens to appreciate the principles by which alone we should be guided in framing a scheme of national education, and to apply the legitimate, unavoidable inferences which spring from them, that some share of moral courage is required to enable one to state with boldness, and without abatement, what is the truth upon this subject.

Ought not every child to receive an education, who, by the structure of the society in which he lives, is placed in a situation that requires him, in time, to act the part of an independent adult? Ought not the education of all to be adapted to the future character they may have to sustain, and the duties they shall be expected and required to perform? And will not every one, who has reflected upon the tardy and deliberate nature of the process of education, affirm that these objects cannot be accomplished in less than seven years?



These are questions, that, without the aid of discussion, must receive an affirmative answer the moment they are propounded. It is necessary only to propose one more, which, no less than those just stated, carries along with it its own reply, and the position taken with reference to the fourth essential feature of our national system, is clearly made out. That question is— if our governments have the right and are under an obligation to employ taxation, or any other coercive measures, to constrain parents to send their children to school; have they not, as a matter of course, the same right, and are they not under equal obligation to continue to employ it until the object aimed at is accomplished?

But of what use is it, some may be inclined to ask, to speak of the existence of rights and obligations, the exercise of which, we, at the same time, affirm to be impracticable? To this I reply, that there is a great deal gained by the settlement of so important a principle; for this being done, the friends of education may at once direct their energies to remove whatever obstacle may stand in the way of its application; and this, throughout the United States, is nothing more nor less than popular indifference. This however is so great, so stubborn, and so blind, that I could scarcely fancy a more difficult task, than would be incurred by undertaking to convince the mass of the people in our country, that it is their duty

not only to send their children to school, but to keep them there seven years ! If I am not mistaken in this impression, why is it, that in many of our states, not one-half the children of a schooling age can, at any given time of the year, be found at school ? And why is it, that in quite as many, the amount of schooling given to a majority of children does not exceed, if it can be said to equal, two or three *entire* years ?

There never was a more flagrant violation of the laws of proportion, a more pernicious forgetfulness of the relation existing between cause and effect, than that which is manifest when we reflect upon the *theory* of our social institutions, in comparison with the means relied upon for making them at once practicable and perpetual. God, in his providence, has allotted twenty years for the education of the human being ; and an exemplary European Monarch has decreed, that the children of his subjects shall have, *at the least*, seven years instruction ; but we, independent republicans of America, reflect upon the wisdom and benevolence of both, by putting our children off with the stinted allowance of but two years of very defective education. Truly, it would seem as though we considered it a part of our boasted liberties, to be independent of the aid of intellectual and moral culture ; that however necessary this may be for a nation of servants who have a wise and good king, who kindly relieves them of

the onerous task of making and executing wholesome laws, yet, such is the charm of liberty, such the virtue of democracy, that it is not at all requisite for the freeborn sons of a self-governing republic!

I most devoutly pray to God, that his warning voice in the riots, mobs, and lynchings, which have grown so common in our land, may be duly heeded by the nation, and may rid us of that fatal self-complacency, which causes us to expect the perpetuity of our government on any other grounds than the general prevalence of something more than a merely nominal education. We appear, as a people, to have become so completely intoxicated with liberty, as to have forgotten that "it is a state of duty as well as privilege." In the licentious enjoyment of its delights, we overlook its obligations. In our intemperate commemoration of National Independence, we are totally forgetful, that to perpetuate its blessings will demand of us quite as much of virtue and intelligence, as its achievement cost our fathers, of their blood and treasure.

The amount of information acquired, and the intellectual and moral developement attained by the generality of our citizens in the common schools, are far below the demands of their political relations. The theory of our government calls for the highest kind of intelligence among the people. In a certain political sense, it is strict-

ly true, that "a little learning is a dangerous thing." There are but two states of society in which the administration of government is easy; viz : where there is a *great deal of ignorance*, or a *great deal of knowledge*. When sufficiently enlightened, the people are made *capable* of self-government; and when *sunk in ignorance*, they easily become the dupes and slaves of others. In the one case, they are but brutes who submit, without resistance, to be guided by reins placed in the hands of a despot; in the other, they undertake and *are fitted* to manage for themselves; and the advantages of the latter over the former condition, depends entirely upon the amount of qualification for its arduous duties.

The most critical condition in which society can be placed, is in the transition state; where a people too knowing to be slaves, have conceived the desire, without possessing the ability, to manage for themselves. This seems to be the ordeal through which the civilized world in general is at present passing. Nor can we deny that there are thousands among us, and their number is every day increasing, who do not believe that even we have altogether escaped its limits. What shall be the issue in any case, depends entirely upon the energy and wisdom with which the schoolmaster shall be enabled to do his office. Our government is an impracticable farce, unless every voter, or a very large majority of voters,

can be made intelligent enough to know how to participate in managing it, and virtuous enough to be disposed to make a right use of their power. The theory of our political organization makes every man a legislator; its practice should see that he is fitted for the task assigned him. The administration of government would be unsafe in the hands of a child, because of ignorance; in the hands of banditti, from want of principle. Now both these disqualifications meet in an unenlightened nation of adults. Who would feel safe on ship-board with an idiot at the helm during a storm? Or with a crew of pirates, in a vessel laden with valuable treasure? The great vessel of state is not one whit more independent of intelligence and principle. To provide them therefore, and of a high order, is the dictate of self-preservation. National shipwreck must be the inevitable consequence of neglecting it.

It is absurd then to suppose, as some do, *that the liberal education* (not that which can be acquired in two years,) *of all the people*, is an impracticability. None but a monarchist of the deepest stamp can with consistency maintain this. It should be left as the exclusive privilege of those minions of royalty, who "regard this scheme" (of general education) "only as the baseless fabric of a vision, *happily* quite beyond any man's power to accomplish on a large scale, but calculated so far as it can be accomplished, to alarm all sober

and prudent persons among the middle and upper orders of society, and to render the labouring classes *uneasy, unhappy, and dissatisfied*;" who think that "it would not be one jot more ridiculous for some friend of humanity to attempt to improve the condition of *the beasts of the field*; to teach the horse his power, and the cow her value, than to teach tailors and cobblers 'the beautiful system of geometry.'" It ill becomes a republican to doubt the possibility of universal, and comparatively speaking, of liberal education. It convicts him of the still greater absurdity of supposing that the rulers, the legislators of the country, (who in a government like ours are synonymous with the people,) have no occasion for extensive intelligence.

Every reason that can possibly be urged, to show the importance of intelligence on the part of members of Congress and of the state legislatures, demonstrates, with augmented force, the necessity of the same for the people, who appoint and guide them. Is intelligence essential to a legislature? Then, the people who control its acts should be enlightened. Are the consequences of ignorant legislation to be deprecated? Then, ignorance should be removed from the people, the fountain of legislation. Would it be considered the height of folly, to send to the legislature a man who knows nothing of the laws, the history, the constitution of his country? Then

there should not be such a private man in the community ; for constituted as our government is, every man is a legislator. The people could not become their own shoemakers without acquiring a knowledge of the art ; no more can they become their own legislators, without suitable education.

Besides, it should never be forgotten, that in this country every man legislates for others as well as for himself. And are the sacred rights of liberty and property to be entrusted to men who are without information from which to form their opinions, and who have so little principle that their vote may be purchased for a pint of whiskey ? Just as soon employ for your physician, a man who is unacquainted with the peculiar properties of magnesia and arsenic. The object of legislation is the protection of our rights ; and it were better to risk our lives with the veriest quack existing, than entrust those rights, without which life is but a burden, to the control of men who cannot anticipate, or who are regardless of the consequences of their official conduct. On the day of an election you go to the polls, and are jostled from the door by a reeling drunkard on the one hand ; and a blustering ignoramus, with a false ticket which he cannot read, on the other ; to both of whom as portions of the sovereign people you must with all due deference give way. This though is but a trifling consideration. Have you property ? These men, with scarce a dollar they can

call their own, are about to express their will, (and it will weigh as much as yours) whether *your* property shall be taxed ; to what extent ; and for what purposes ; and their voice is to be heard in the decision of a principle which may affect the safety of your dearest interests. What then is to be done ? Shall they be denied their vote ? No ; of two evils let us always choose the least ; especially when by prudent management, we can contrive to make its duration temporary. The only effectual remedy in this case, is, to educate their children ; and thus take care, that for every one such character at present, we do not entail upon the next generation, some half a dozen like him.

Most solemnly am I impressed with the belief, that unless the country can be aroused to a far deeper sense of the saving necessity of education, and of a species of education incomparably superior to that which now satisfies it, we shall, in a few years, have on our hands a populace, a canaille, that will seriously endanger, if they do not overwhelm our liberties. Are these apprehensions groundless ? Whose heart does not quail at the prospects of his country, when he reads of hundreds of thousands of foreign paupers crowding our shores ; and hears of mob after mob, even in regions where material for such a thing was not suspected to exist ; and sees the elections in our larger towns oftentimes controlled by a reckless populace ? A populace should have no exist-



ence in a republic. It is utterly incompatible with its safety, to say nothing of its well being. The people composing it will always make full use of the power given them, and even more. The rabble never fail to vote ; and being the ready tools of demagogues, they generally vote wrong. And yet, dangerous as such a description of persons is to our liberties, who does not see the alarming agrarian tendency of things in our country ? From the period of our independence down to the present moment, power has incessantly been striding from the few to the many ; there has been, in the spirit and forms of our associated governments, a steady departure from monarchy toward extreme democracy, till the right of suffrage is exercised without discrimination. The power of the people has been thus extended to its utmost possible limits ; and without the saving efficacy of universal education, it will prove to be merely an augmentation of power, without a proportionate increase of principle, and knowledge, which alone confer ability to use it safely. In such event, its possession cannot fail to prove unprofitable to its holders, and dangerous to the commonwealth. If the subjects of a despotic prince must of necessity be brutes, what is an ignorant self-governing people but a mob ? And we had better risk the avarice and ambition of the most arbitrary sovereign upon earth, than be at the mercy of the passions of a lawless populace.

No condition of society can be imagined more deplorable, than that, in which numbers, or merely muscular strength, set in motion by the baser passions, is disproportionately arrayed against virtue and intelligence.

What then is to be done to arrest the progress of this dreaded evil? There is no other answer, were the question propounded a thousand times, than that we must, by the salutary influences of real education, prevent the numbers of the ignorant and vicious, already formidable, from becoming quadrupled, by their descendants, upon the next generation.

But here it behooves us to consider, that the education fitted to subserve this purpose cannot be forced upon our youth in two or three years. It amounts to something more than being able simply to read and write. These attainments alone, essential as they are, will not make their possessor a valuable, *moral* member of society; and an *intelligent*, safe voter; and any amount or kind of education that comes short of these results, is unfit, and insufficient, for our national wants. Our government contemplates and *makes* every man a *practical* politician; and I maintain that what an individual is obliged to practise as a man, he ought to learn in youth. Every man among us has to *act the legislator*, and the only question to determine is, shall he do it well or ill? Every body is expected to practise morality;

all should then be taught the principles of moral science. But where is the school system in our country, whose requisitions are adapted to these comprehensive ends?

The sentiment is general enough throughout the Union, that the happiness and prosperity of society, together with the permanence of our free institutions, depend upon the universal diffusion of knowledge. But, if I mistake not, we impose on ourselves egregiously, by identifying the diffusion of useful knowledge, with what is commonly called education. We confound things which may easily have a separate existence, as cause and effect, as means and end. The education received at the schools where nine-tenths of the children of the nation are instructed, does little more than, by teaching them to read, put it in their power to acquire knowledge. It gives them none, or very little. They learn to read, and thereby gain a key to knowledge; but where do they read to learn? It is certainly not at school. Look, for example, at the list of school books, published a few years since by the superintendent of common schools, in the State of New-York; and select, if you can, the work designed to teach the young their future duties as members of society, and of a free government. Your eyes can fix on but a *single book* used in a *single town*, out of the seven hundred and fifty seven in the State, which proposes to give instruction as to the principles of the

government under which our children are to live, and in whose administration they will have to participate ! And yet, strange to tell, the New-York common school system is decidedly the best in the United States. To the honour of this noble State, she has of late been making most exemplary efforts to elevate the standard of education, by establishing neighbourhood libraries, and by other measures ; but still the condition of her common schools, at the period of which I speak, would present a very flattering picture of the present state of things in the greater part of the Union. Does not this most impressively demonstrate the necessity of a radical reform in public sentiment as to the kind and quantity of education requisite for our social purposes ?

It could scarcely be believed, did not the general practice force it on our notice, that the total of instruction aimed at by a very large majority of our citizens for their children, consists of reading, writing, and ciphering ; to which are occasionally added, by way of luxury, a little geography, and English grammar. Now, to suppose that this, even were it gained by all, is a suitable and sufficient education for a self-governing people, might be denominated ludicrous, were it not too solemn an absurdity to admit of laughter. The satirist could not make a more unexceptionable use of his peculiar talent, than by exposing this national error to the nation's eyes. Diogenes ;

cock, when stripped of his feathers, was quite as good a pretext for a man, as this, for national education. We should be ashamed to employ the following as our reasoning, when discussing the practicability of self-government; viz. every man who can read and write (whether he reads or not,) is capable of governing himself, and of assisting to govern others; and as every man can be taught to read and write, therefore republicanism is practicable; and yet, miserable as this reasoning is, it appears to furnish the criterion by which our general practice is regulated. Ludicrous as this syllogism seems, it nevertheless exhibits the foundation on which we profess to rest the hopes, not only of our own nation, but, as identified with the issue of our experiment, the prospects of other countries and other generations.

Shame on that parsimony, the foulest blot in our national character and history, which has given practical currency to such preposterous reasoning.

But such sentiments, and such extravagant expectations, will not be suffered to continue long among us. In despite of the too much dreaded cry of "visionary," I dare avow that I cherish for the cause of education in our country, not only nobler aspirations, but far higher hopes. Yes; we want for every child in our land — for the son of the farmer, the mechanic, and even the day labourer — as well as for the child of the lawyer,

the doctor, the clergyman, and the merchant, such an education as will enable him to understand his rights, and appreciate his privileges; as shall inspire him with respect both for himself, and for the laws; shall qualify him for discharging the various duties he owes his God, his country, his neighbour, and himself; in short, such an education as can make him *equal to his condition*, both as a private citizen, and as a participator either directly or indirectly in the administration of the government. There is ample time for education allotted by Providence during the minority of each individual; and as a nation, we have most abundantly the means; what then hinders the attainment of our proudest wishes, the realizing our fondest hopes, but the want of faith and of a hearty will?

To return however, to the point from which we set out; I conclude that although seven years are by no means more than sufficient to give such an education as is required by the nature of our institutions; yet, so far is this demand ahead of the general practice throughout the United States, that we have not a single legislature which could attempt to execute it, as a part of its common school requisitions, with the slightest prospect of success. Nor will its practicability be rendered in the least degree more probable, until a mighty revolution shall have been effected in the senti-

ments of the people, both as to the range, and as to the value of education.

#### SECTION IV.

**Importance of establishing Seminaries for the Professional education of Teachers.**

**THE** fifth feature which I deem essential in a system of American education is, that "It must establish Seminaries for the Professional education of a sufficient number of Teachers."

This is by far the most important of all the arrangements requisite to put in operation a proper system of national education. Till this is made, all other measures will have but little effect.

The necessity and value of such a provision have been so ably stated by others, that I shall express my views in regard to it, by making a few quotations. It will be perceived from these, that the minds of all who have reflected upon the subject, are fully impressed with the belief, that every thing, as to the improvement and spread of education, depends essentially upon the elevation of the business of teaching to the rank of a profession.

The following is from one of the annual messages of Gov. Clinton to the Legislature of New-

York. "Our system of instruction, (he remarks,) with all its numerous benefits, is still, however, susceptible of great improvements. Ten years of the life of a child, may now be spent in a common school. In *two years* the elements of instruction may be acquired ; and the remaining eight years must be spent either in repetition, or in idleness, unless the teachers of common schools are competent to instruct in the higher branches of knowledge. The outlines of Geography, Algebra, Mineralogy, Agricultural Chemistry, Mechanical Philosophy, Surveying, Geometry, Astronomy, Political Economy, and Ethics, might be communicated in that period of time by able preceptors, without essential interference with the calls of domestic industry. *The vocation of a teacher in its influence on the destinies of the rising and all future generations, has either not been fully understood or not duly estimated.* It is, or ought to be, ranked among the learned professions. With the full admission of the respectability of several, who now officiate in that capacity, still it must be conceded, that the information of many of the instructors of common schools, does not extend beyond rudimental education, that our expanding population requires constant accession to their numbers, and that to realize their views, it is necessary that some new plan for obtaining able teachers, should be devised. I therefore recommend a Seminary for the education of teachers



in the monitorial system of instruction and in those useful branches of knowledge, which are proper to engraft on elementary attainments."

Of the source of the following remarks, on the same subject, I regret that I am ignorant ; but they will be found to recommend themselves.

"The character of schools, and of course their political, moral, and religious influence on the community, depend almost solely on the character of the teachers. Their influence is strong or weak, just in proportion as the instructors are skilful or ignorant, energetic or feeble ; it is in this direction or that direction, just as they are imbued with one or another principle. So that whatever is done to elevate the character of teachers, elevates at the same time and in the same degree, the character of the schools which they teach, and enlarges and strengthens their influence on the community. And whatever is done or suffered to lower the character of teachers, must sink at the same time and in the same degree, the character of schools, and destroy or prevent their influence upon society. I am aware that many other considerations must be taken into the account in organizing an energetic and perfect system of instruction. But all of them, though important, are subsequent in their nature to the preparation of teachers ; and none can be attempted with a reasonable expectation of accomplishing them to the greatest advantage, until good teachers are provided and

ready for the work. It would be beginning wrong, to build houses, and tell your young and inexperienced instructors, to teach this or to teach that subject, however desirable a knowledge of such subjects might be, whilst it is obvious that they cannot know how properly to teach any subject. The science of teaching, for it must be made a science, is first in the order of nature. And it is to this point that attention must first be applied in order to effect any essential improvements."

In strict accordance with these views, are those of the illustrious Cousin, as expressed in the subjoined extract.

"It is a principle generally established in Prussia, that the goodness of a school is in exact proportion to the goodness of the master. What constitutes a good school is not a fine building. It is not even the excellence of the regulations, which without a faithful and intelligent execution of them, are only useless on paper. A school is what its director is. He is the life and soul of it. If he is a man of ability, he will turn the poorest and humblest elements to account; if he is incapable, the best and most prolific, will remain sterile in his hands."

A committee of the Legislature of Connecticut, in its report, observes, that "inattention to the character and qualifications of teachers will be followed by deplorable consequences. Without assiduous, efficient, moral, and learned teachers,

our schools must sink. The dividends of our munificent funds, may indeed be drawn from the treasury, and the schools opened and kept for a time sufficient to absorb them by incompetent instructors; but the standard of education will soon be lowered, the community cease to be animated by the spirit of the age, and a large portion of our youth be consigned to ignorance and immorality."

A committee of the Legislature of Massachusetts, after declaring that the free schools of the Commonwealth are not such as they ought to be, that they fail most essentially of accomplishing the high object for which they were established, proceeds —

"Nor is there any difficulty in arriving at the true cause; can it in a great majority of cases be traced to any other than the incompetency of teachers? And in this fact there is nothing mysterious. Can the teachers be otherwise than incompetent, when no pains are taken to instruct them in the business of their profession; when in one word, they are not reputed and constituted a profession?"

The following and last quotation that I shall make, contains a very solemn, and I would fain hope, irresistible appeal to the reason and affections of all parents.

"To whom do we assign the business of instructing and governing our children from four to

twelve years of age? Who take upon themselves the trust of forming those principles and habits which are formed and confirmed in manhood, and make our innocent little ones, through life happy or miserable in themselves, and the blessing or the curse of society? This is the only service in which we venture to employ young and often ignorant persons without some previous instruction in their appropriate duties. We require experience in all those whom we employ to perform the slightest mechanical labour for us. We would not buy a coat or a hat of one who should undertake to make them without a previous apprenticeship. Nor would any one have the hardihood to offer us the result of his first essay in manufacturing either of these articles. We do not even send an old shoe to be mended, except it is to a workman, of whose skill we have had ample proof. Yet we commit our children to be educated, to those who know nothing, absolutely nothing, of the complicated and difficult duties assigned to them. Shall we trust the development of the delicate bodies, the susceptible hearts, and tender minds of our little children, to those who have no knowledge of their nature? Can they, can these rude hands finish the workmanship of the Almighty? No language can express the astonishment which a moment's reflection on this subject excites in me."

It would be as impracticable, as unnecessary,

to offer much in addition to these quotations, to illustrate the importance of the subject to which they relate. I shall sum up all I have to say in a single suggestion, which affords a most impressive and expansive theme for reflection.

Just let it be recollected, that where the theory of our government is realized, every single individual is supposed to have gone to school; in other words, *that every mind, and every heart in the community, has been subjected to the influence of teachers*; and this, too, in the ductile period of childhood, and for six or seven years. Add to this what every body remembers respecting the reverence and confidence with which his teacher's opinions were received; that the "master hath said it," were almost regarded as "sacramental words;" and to this, what every body knows and feels in relation to the permanence of early impressions; and where, I would ask, is the class of men in society, to whom one-half as much has been entrusted? And yet, this is the station for which almost any one is considered suitable, and in which alone, of all the various avocations of life, professional experience and skill, are practically deemed unnecessary. There is not a single legislature in the Union but that of New-York, (and it but very lately,) which has commenced to act upon this subject; or which, (to speak without exaggeration of the importance of this measure,) has begun at the beginning.

## SECTION V.

Love of money the true cause of the defective state of education among us.—Acknowledged imperfection of our best school systems.—Has been almost a universal mistake to try to make education general by making it cheap.—This has tended to throw the business of instruction into the hands of inferior men.—Depreciation of the quality of education a necessary consequence.—Our pecuniary provision for the cause of education altogether inadequate.

THE sixth essential feature of a system of national education suited to the United States is, that “It must provide means for the accommodation and comfortable support of teachers.”

Until this is done, that is, until school-houses and teachers are provided, all other arrangements are of no account. Hence the raising of money has constituted one of the most difficult and important problems connected with legislation upon the subject. But why has this been difficult? Because as *a nation* we are too poor to afford to educate our children liberally? Our commercial, agricultural, and manufacturing statistics give an overwhelming answer in the negative. What then has been the cause of difficulty? The real answer expressed in the simplest language that can be employed is, that the people have not felt the necessity and worth of education as they ought. The money requisite for all the purposes of education must in one shape or other come

from them, and the great and engrossing legislative question, in this country, has ever been, how shall they be got to furnish it?

In some other countries, in Prussia for example, a very summary answer has been given to this inquiry. A royal edict being issued, demanding so much of each district, the officers of government, backed by a standing army, enforce the payment of the amount without regard to the will of the people upon the subject. It has been *assumed* that the welfare and safety of the country and of the government require that the people should be educated, and therefore the raising of money for this purpose has been put upon the footing of any other tax designed to further these essential ends.

Precisely such have been the assumption and the doctrine in the United States, as they should be every where; but *we* have to employ very different methods of putting them in execution. What may be done under a despotic government by force, must be done under a free government from choice. With us, the government and the governed are the same. The former has, or ought to have, no interests, as it has no rights, nor means, separated from the latter. In Prussia, the payment of taxes is involuntary. With us, taxation (at least so far as relates to the majority\*) is a

\* This is a very important distinction; for, taxation, with reference to the minority, is as really a matter of coercion in the

voluntary contribution. It can in no case be imposed, or at least retained in force, without the approbation of the larger part of the voters in the country ; and as the advocates of efficient measures for the benefit of education are for the most part greatly in the minority, they have been reduced to the necessity of employing legislative tact, to accomplish what they have not been able to effect by the naked force of reasoning and principle.

It was this that gave rise to the ingenious *stratagem* (for such it certainly is,) of a conditional appropriation of the proceeds of a fund, which forms

United States, as it is in Prussia. A legislative statute, in this country, is an *authoritative* expression of the will of the represented majority which is as binding upon the minority both in and out of the legislature, as it is upon the majority. All option ceases equally on the part of both, the moment a formal expression of this will is made ; and thenceforward, (unless the statute expire by limitation, or be repealed,) both are *obliged* to obey ; the former, even though a sufficient number should change their minds to throw the balance in favour of the other side ; and the latter, no odds how averse they may be to doing so.

Hence, taxation as really involves compulsion, in a Republic, as in a despotic government ; and the represented majority have as much a right, in strict accordance with the spirit of our institutions, to use coercive measures for the support of education, as the king of Prussia has, or as they themselves have, for the support of government.

I avail myself of this opportunity to state this principle thus explicitly, because of its important bearing on the cause of education ; and to show still more clearly the propriety of the use which has been made of it in other parts of this volume,



the leading feature in all our school systems, and is rapidly bringing the children of the nation into attendance upon the public schools, such as they are. The people at large not being sufficiently impressed with the importance of education to allow, or rather *to make*, through their representatives, a direct and ample draft on property for its advancement, have been allured to acquiesce in legislative action for this purpose, by the *seeming* offer of pecuniary inducement. *Their* property in lands, or stocks, or in some other form, has been taken and converted into a fund, and then they have been told, that if they would raise as much more by a voluntary tax, they would receive their quota of the proceeds of this fund.

The expedient is a perfectly fair one, and reflects great credit on the tact of its originators, for it has operated like a charm. It is only a very partial exercise of the authority which the legislature has a moral and constitutional right to extend much further, were it practicable. All that can be regretted about it, is the state of public sentiment and feeling on which its necessity is founded. That we should have to be beguiled into the execution of an end so important, and so noble, to say the least, is mortifying. It does not present us in a dignified or enviable light to foreigners who reproach us for our boastful pride in our institutions. It affords the rather singular if not ludicrous spectacle of a wealthy, free, and independent peo-

ple, saying to themselves — “We are not sufficiently persuaded of the advantages of general education to allow our legislatures to tax us to any extent, *directly*, for its promotion, but we will permit them to take some of *our* property and use it for this purpose, provided they will give it back to us on the condition that we shall give them more ! That is, we will first tax ourselves for the creation of a common fund, and then we will distribute its interest among ourselves, for the purpose of prevailing upon ourselves to tax ourselves still further, to educate our children !”

But why should I seem to *strive* to give the utmost prominence to circumstances which are by no means creditable to our national character ? It is precisely because I love my country, and would infinitely rather contribute to her lasting benefit by the exposure of her faults, than help to injure her by flattering her vanity by their concealment. Yes, I love my country, and am proud of her institutions ; I am proud of her history, proud of her present *comparative* condition, and still prouder of her animating prospects. I dare avow, that I expect for herself in the way of national glory and felicity, the utmost that any rational enthusiast has ever predicted ; and for the world at large, all the benefit which has ever been promised it from her example. But I expect this solely because of my belief in the preserving, elevating, and transforming influence of education, properly so called :

and when I see, that although a kind Providence has blessed her with abundant means to make *this* universal through her borders, she prefers expending them for superfluous articles of dress, or food, or furniture, or equipage ; how can I avoid joining in the cry of shame ! shame on such ingratitude and want of policy !

It is impossible to deny that *the love* of money, — that “root of all evil,” — that foe to all good, presents the only hinderance to the speedy establishment of a system of national education that would soon dispel the forebodings which the recent history of our country has forced upon the minds of thousands of her most patriotic citizens, and reinspire us with hope that there is yet before her, a long, a glorious, and a beneficent career.

But what is the immediate object for which the means are thus begrudged, or are so stintedly supplied ? Is it designed to send them abroad for the purpose of supplying foreign charities ? or to expend them at home on public works, or upon some other objects, whose benefits, though great, are indirect ? No — but for the education of our children, and of the children of our political brethren — for the honour, the safety, and the lasting happiness of our families, and of our common country. The spectacle of a rich but miserly father poring over his dusty bags of gold, surrounded by a family of half-starved, rag-clad children ; or, of a noble vessel heaving and plunging

on the eve of ruin, while her passengers refuse to throw their chattels overboard, though to save her from destruction, presents but a feeble picture of a wealthy nation grudging a pittance from its yearly earnings to educate its youth, and to preserve its institutions from impending ruin.

The cry is general — “*the country is in danger!*” The opinion is universal, that in education is our only safety; and yet, millions of surplus wealth are annually squandered upon objects worse than useless, while the minds and hearts of our future citizens are allowed to go uneducated, constantly swelling the formidable mass of vice and ignorance which even now, as some think, threatens the safety of our government. Oh the waste of intellect! the waste of unemployed, and misdirected mind in our country! Who, who can rightly estimate it? and yet what is doing for its cultivation? We cannot evade the charge, that our legislative provisions for this object have been wholly insufficient; and, that as a necessary consequence, the prevalent education in our country is alike beneath the dignity and wants of a republican people.

I shall devote the remainder of this section to a demonstration of this fact.

There are not a few who are disposed to question whether legislation has not done more harm than good to education in the United States. This impression, however, is extravagant, and does not sufficiently take into consideration the clogs with

which legislation has been fettered in consequence of the dependent relation it sustains to public sentiment. Still, although our governments have done much for which the nation's thanks are due, their measures have been in some respects very injudicious, and at best, when speaking comparatively with our social wants, have been in a great degree unproductive, in consequence of the excessive economy by which they have been uniformly marked.

We have been so long accustomed to admire, and even to revere, those common school systems by which one-fourth of the entire population of a state has been assembled, at the same time, to receive instruction ; which have placed a school-house within a mile and a half of the home of every child ; and have *professedly* put the children of the rich and poor upon the same intellectual level ; that it is rather an invidious undertaking, to allude to probable imperfections as appertaining to them. Through the propensity we naturally have to concentrate upon an object of admiration all possible perfection, we are disposed to regard such wonderful results as incontestable evidence of the intrinsic merits of the systems which produced them, and to think it safe to adopt their provisions almost without investigation or scrutiny. But if it be, that there are obvious and *acknowledged* imperfections belonging to them ; this very propensity affords the strongest motive for our

observing a cautious prudence in imitation. That there are such imperfections, I shall endeavour to show not only in my own words, but in the far stronger language of some who have been acquainted with these systems from intimate observation and experience. The first quotation I shall make is from the report of the superintendent of common schools in New-York, made January 23, 1827, and is as follows:

“The system of education,” says the executive committee of Massachusetts, “as now supported by the provisions of law, has but little changed with all the astonishing changes which half a century of national independence, of vicissitude from poverty and privation, to public and private prosperity, wealth and luxury, has produced.

“This remark,” the superintendent continues, “is peculiarly applicable to our state.

“Notwithstanding the rapid advances which this state has made in population, in wealth, in agriculture, manufactures, and internal improvements; it is not to be denied, that the mode of instruction in the great mass of the common schools has remained almost stationary. This remark is not applied disparagingly, but in reference to the state of the common schools, compared with that elevated character which it is desirable they should attain.

“In Connecticut, the annual distribution of the school money amounts to eighty-five cents to each

person enumerated between four and sixteen; and in a recent report of a committee to the legislature, it is stated, that "the common schools on which as on a favourite child, the public resources have been lavished with great liberality, *but with little care*, have been gradually declining in their standing. The result of the experiment, has decided that no appropriations of money will secure the increasing prosperity of schools."

Mr. J. Orville Taylor, to whom the American public are indebted for a very valuable work on "District Schools," expresses the opinion that "The school systems which the several states in the Union, with the exception of four or five, have devised and adopted, are miserably deficient and defective. Perhaps the workings of our best systems are such that even these exceptions should not be made."

Another distinguished advocate of education in New-York, John Duer, Esq. says, that, "Looking to the modes of Germany and France, no system of public instruction has yet been organized in any of the states, and in none has the appropriate work of legislation been more than commenced. I do not hesitate to avow the belief that without regulations far more extensive than have yet been introduced; a control far more enlightened and constant than has yet been exercised — and fiscal aid far more ample than has yet been afforded — it is vain to expect that the character of our

common schools can be truly and permanently improved."

The following language on this subject, is employed by a committee of the legislature of Massachusetts in its report :

"It needs at this time, neither arguments nor an exhibition of facts, to demonstrate to the legislature, that the free schools of the commonwealth are not such as they ought to be ; *that they fail most essentially of accomplishing the high objects for which they were established*, and towards the support of which, so large an amount of money is annually raised among the people. *Upon this subject, public opinion is fully settled.*"

With such testimony of the imperfection, and comparative unfruitfulness, of the common school systems of the three states which have been the pioneers and models for the rest of the Union ; testimony consisting of direct admissions on the part of persons officially connected with them ; it cannot be considered presumptuous that I should undertake to specify some of the details in which these concessions are verified, and thus, endeavour to make good the latter part of my assertion, viz :—that the measures adopted by the older states for the promotion of education have been in some respects extremely injudicious, and consequently in a great measure unproductive.

—Here, I would premise, that all the common school systems in the United States may be re-



duced to three classes: the first originating with Massachusetts; the second with Connecticut; the third and best, (being but a combination of the other two,) with New-York. In providing the means for defraying the expense of general education, Massachusetts relies almost exclusively upon district taxation; Connecticut to as great an extent upon her fund; and New-York, most wisely, upon both; using the proceeds of a fund as a stimulant to voluntary taxation.

Not to dwell on mistakes appertaining to particular systems, it appears to me that all our legislation throughout the Union is justly chargeable with the following defect, viz. — that the tendency, if not the aim of legislative action has been, *to make education general, by making it cheap.*

The only, or at least, the principal object of most of our legislatures seems to have been the *multiplication* of schools. In this some of them have succeeded to perfection. I can scarcely imagine an additional school to be wanting, where there is already provided one for every fifty children between the ages of five and fifteen.

But, generally speaking, it has been, (according to the admission of eastern men themselves, as already shown,) *a multiplication of bad schools.* Regard has been had, almost exclusively, to the amount, and not enough to the quality of education. The character of schools has been sacrificed to number.

In support of these assertions, I remark that the excessive economy with which the business of education has been managed could not fail to be injurious to its character. There is in every thing an invariable and obstinate relation between quality and price, *which is above the control of legislation* ; and, as the theory has been to make education universal by making it cheap, depreciation in quality has been, as it must ever be in such cases, the unavoidable consequence. Throughout New-England and New-York, the *average* wages of instructors in the *public schools* do not exceed from ten to twenty dollars a month ; whilst those of stage drivers, hostlers, and even shoeblacks, are nearly, if not quite as much.

Now, unless it can be made to appear, either that there is no occasion for talents, experience, and attainments, in the business of education ; or, that these can be purchased at the same rate with the most menial manual labour ; the grade of common school education in the regions mentioned, could not, in the nature of things, be different from what I have represented it to be. I appeal to political economists, and ask, if, according to the laws and circumstances which govern human action, it is not absurd to expect the services of the mind and of the hand for the same remuneration ? Suppose the wages of the clergyman, the physician, the lawyer, and the statesman, were

reduced to half

regulated as are those of the schoolmaster ; what would be the result ?

It is a principle or rule to which there is no exception, that "productive agents will always direct their attention to those employments where the greatest profits may be realized." It is true, scantiness of remuneration may be compensated by the bestowment of honours ; and the absence of the latter may be supplied by an excess of the former. For many civil offices which are far from being lucrative, we often see a crowd of competitors ; and the brutal traffic in human flesh, because of its gains, is still vigorously prosecuted, in spite of the execrations of Christians and philanthropists.

To the instructor of youth, however, neither of these inducements is held out. It would seem indeed, as if the employment of teaching were purposely loaded with every thing calculated to deter men of talents and attainments from embarking in it. In public estimation, it is scarcely a reputable business ; schoolmaster, and pedagogue, being often used as terms of reproach. It is habitually spoken of as an "humble calling." The statesman, the lawyer, or the physician, is lauded to the skies for having raised *himself* to a *dignified position* in society, from having been a *schoolmaster*. The young instructor is sustained and stimulated by no hope of promotion. To expect advancement in society, he must rid himself of the badges of his office. His salary, too, is not

only on a par in many cases with that of the day labourer, but connected with the smallness of the pay, there is this peculiar discouragement, that it is *fixed and made permanent* either by law or custom ; so that there is but little hope, (a hope enjoyed by every other class of persons,) that enterprise and industry will be rewarded by such an increase of his gains, as will enable him to lay by something for the future wants of his family.

Under such circumstances, what else could reasonably be expected, than that the business of education should be conducted by the refuse talents of the country ? What man of sensibility or self-respect ever embarks in the employment if he can avoid it ; or, if driven to it from necessity, continues in it longer than can be helped ?

To corroborate these statements, I appeal to the consciousness of every one who doubts their truth, and beg him to ask himself the honest reason why *he himself* does not become a schoolmaster ? I appeal also to fact, and inquire, for example, who are the teachers of the common *free* schools of New-England ? In the first place, they are, in a majority of cases, young, unmarried men. Secondly, and consequently, they are without experience. Thirdly, their engagements are but transient. Teaching is with them but a temporary expedient, a means to some ulterior end. In the summer, when the larger boys are needed to aid in the operations on the farms, the schools for the

smaller children are taught by females, who usually receive one dollar, or at most two or three dollars a week. The winter schools are for the most part taught, either by students of colleges, who obtain leave of absence, that by teaching two or three months they may supply themselves with the means to pay their college bills; or by the sons of farmers, who, during the long winters of New-England, are without employment.

In most cases, therefore, teaching is anything but a permanent business in which ambition and interest prompt the incumbents to excel. The making a little ready money, and not the improvement of their pupils is, avowedly, their principal object. Of course, it is a service they perform with just as little trouble to themselves as possible. As the same individuals are rarely engaged two or three winters in the same neighbourhood, or even in the business any where, reputation for teaching is scarcely an object of desire. The character, with which they leave the school committed to their charge, is of little moment, as they do not expect again to solicit the patronage of the neighbourhood. In the absence of motive, therefore, fidelity could not be expected; and in the absence of experience and consequently of skill, what can reasonably be looked for but the most injurious preceptorial quackery? We cannot demand superior workmanship from raw apprentices; nor expect that patient, painstaking, and

devoted application, which successful teaching requires, from mere temporary and uninterested agents.

To show that I am sustained in these impressions by the most respectable authority, as well as by what I believe to be sound reasoning, I quote the opinion and acknowledgement of one of the superintendents of the New-York common schools upon the subject. No one in our country has ever enjoyed better opportunities of forming correct ideas on these topics than Mr. Flagg, and no one has improved his opportunities better; yet he declares that "all the advantages anticipated from training persons to become teachers, will be lost, unless the inhabitants of the districts are willing to make such compensation, as will secure the services of persons thus qualified. *The miserable economy which not unfrequently prevails of employing cheap teachers without reference to their fitness, has a tendency to depress, rather than to elevate the standard of education in our Common Schools.*"

To prove still further that these assertions are true and not illiberal, I may refer to the *history* of pecuniary provisions for the advancement of education. We cannot for a moment take ground, in self-defence, in any quarter of the Union, against the charge, that these have been altogether inadequate; beneath the dignity as well as against the policy of a country organized as ours is, and cherishing its lofty aspirations. In

almost every instance, our colleges have been left dependant upon private contributions, and the current fees for tuition. A table setting forth the entire sums in money or property received by our higher institutions, and classifying them according as they have proceeded from legislative grants, or private bounty, would form an interesting and valuable contribution to our literary statistics; whilst the result would present to our view a contrast by no means complimentary to legislative liberality. And if there were appended to this a list of the munificent donations made by European governments to their Colleges and Universities, there is an equal certainty that our national vanity would not be flattered by the comparison.

But it is when we contemplate the provisions made professedly for the *universal diffusion of knowledge*, that we see narrow views, grovelling aims, and inadequate arrangements, superlatively exhibited. Every annual message of our Governors is filled with lofty encomiums upon the value of education, making sufficiently distinct acknowledgements of the necessity of general intelligence for the "safety and well being of our political institutions," and recommending liberal appropriations by the legislatures; but when we come to scrutinize the practical sequel of these lofty professions, we must prepare our minds for the most mortifying disappointments. Truly, the ancient fable of the mountain and the mouse involuntarily

obtrudes itself upon the mind, when we are told that the respective governments of an association of aspiring republics consider they have amply provided for a splendid, happy, and prosperous career, by having set afloat a scheme of education which proposes little more than to teach the children of its citizens how to read and write ; but our surprise is heightened by a survey of the means relied upon for furnishing even this stinted allowance of that intellectual and moral training which is, by acknowledgement, so vitally necessary to social, no less than to personal well being. The largest sum appropriated by any of the states, exceeds, but little, one dollar a year for every child ; and even this appropriation is made in such a way as is calculated to induce the people to rely upon it as sufficient to defray the entire cost of the tuition of their children.

The unavoidable effects of such inadequate allowances must be, that the schools will be kept open but a small portion of the year, that the teachers will be oppressed by too great a number of pupils, and that none but the most incompetent persons will be willing to engage at all in the business of instruction, for no others will consent to work for the pittance of remuneration that is offered. And such, it is generally admitted in Connecticut, has been the operation of their fund.

But even the ingenious, and deservedly praised system of New-York is scarcely less liable to the



charge of pecuniary incompetency. In attempting to establish this position, I adopt most cheerfully as the standard of my views, and the criterion for my reasoning, the statement of one of her own distinguished citizens, John Duer, Esq. as to what would constitute an *adequate* appropriation for the support of common schools.—“I would recommend, (he says,) that each state should raise a school fund, *sufficient for the entire support of schools*; that a suitable school-house and apparatus with a convenient dwelling-house for the teacher, *be furnished by the State, for each district*; and that every school-house be supplied with a *well qualified teacher*, who shall receive from the State *a suitable compensation*. This, I think, is the proper size of a school fund.”

The only point in which I should be tempted to dissent from the views expressed in this quotation, relates to the proposed dependence upon a fund. I confess I am afraid of this. It is an important fact, fully established by experience, that just in proportion as the people are *apparently* relieved from defraying the expense of education, will their estimation of its worth be lowered, and their interest in the neighbourhood school diminished. Hence the more direct and responsible the connexion between the teacher and his employers the better; and hence also it is expedient to leave the contribution and application of means, for the most part, in the hands of the people.

The primary object of a fund is not to relieve the people from the cost of education, nor even to aid them in defraying it ; but simply to induce them to impose a tax, and a *sufficient* tax, on property. The legislature, beyond a doubt, possesses the right to impose this tax itself ; but as its exercise would do no good where the people are unwilling, it has been driven to the expedient of a conditional appropriation of the proceeds of a fund, for the simple purpose of overcoming popular indifference ; and it is truly surprising how small an appropriation will effect this object. The apparently large fund of New-York *has never afforded over twenty-five cents to every child of a schooling age* ; and yet she has managed, by means of this small sum, to make the people raise enough, by voluntary taxation and otherwise, to send to school every child (within a trifling fraction,) of the legal age.

This exhibits the true theory of a school fund ; and more than this a legislature is not able to do. It owns no independent fund, from which to provide for education as a charity. "No matter, therefore, how the operation may be cloaked in mystery," all money appropriated by the legislature is the fruit of taxation, and comes originally from the people. All common school systems presuppose the *ability of the people* to maintain them. If *they* are not able, the legislature has no extra means from which to aid them. It cannot

even procure the services of teachers on terms materially lower than they themselves can. The only advantage which it has in this respect is in its credit. But this can operate only as a guarantee, and not as a substitute, for the payment of salaries. If, therefore, the people have to defray the entire cost of schools, it is better to let them feel it; that according to an obvious principle, they may attach a higher value to education. Let the money be conveyed directly, and by themselves, from their own pockets to the teachers who receive it. Thus, the parents, and the instructor, being often brought in contact, will acquire, the one a lively interest in the school and a disposition to co-operate in promoting its welfare, whilst the other will be brought under the constant influence of a quickened sense of responsibility.

But this is nothing to my present purpose. My only concern, just now, is with the amount asserted to be requisite in order to put and keep in operation a competent school system; and with the views of Mr. Duer on this subject, I most cordially and fully acquiesce. They are marked by any thing but extravagance. A moment's analysis will convince us of this fact. What, let us ask, are the essential elements of a school? It is evident that besides scholars, there must be, first, a teacher; second, a school-house, with suitable furniture; and third, apparatus, or appropriate instruments of in-

struction. These are indispensable. Less could not be demanded, and this is the sum of the requisition made by Mr. Duer.

But when we come to make an estimate of the cost of executing these reasonable demands, we shall see at once, that it amounts to a sum too far above what is now allowed by the people to admit the hope, that the legislature dare venture to appropriate it, at least for a very long time to come, and before a radical change shall have been wrought in the popular sentiment as to the relative value of education and money.

In 1834 there were in New-York, ten thousand one hundred and thirty-two organized school districts ; and consequently, this number of teachers, and of school and teachers' houses would be needed. Now, supposing each dwelling house to cost three hundred dollars ; each school-house the same ; apparatus for each school one hundred dollars ; we shall have the materials for the following table, exhibiting the *capital* necessary to be at once invested, in order to provide accommodations for the existing schools, viz :

School-houses,  $10,132 \times 300 = 3,039,600$

Dwelling do.  $10,132 \times 300 = 3,039,600$

Apparatus,  $10,132 \times 100 = 1,013,200$

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Total of capital, \$7,092,400

Besides these permanent investments, there are

current annual expenses which should amount to nearly half this sum. For instance, not to say anything about the cost of repairs which must be very considerable, the wages of teachers alone, estimating the salary of each at three hundred dollars, would be —  $10,132 \times 300 = 3,039,600$  !!

And will any one say that three hundred dollars is too much to allow for the services of a *good* schoolmaster? One thing is certain, they cannot be procured for less. No man is fit to teach school, unless he have been professionally educated, either by himself, (as most of our good teachers have been,) or by others, for the business. And can it be imagined that a *professional man*, having incurred the expenses of a professional education, will spend his time in a laborious employment for less than three hundred dollars, or even for so small a sum as this? Would a lawyer or a doctor do it; especially where *a maximum of pay is fixed*? Can teachers do with less? It is impossible. None but an incompetent drone, or a menial, would attempt it. Generally speaking, the man who would consent to work for less is not worth having. His services would be dear at three hundred cents; for the irreparable injury he might inflict on the mind defies computation in money. If it be impolitic to employ a *cheap* engineer, or architect, who, through professional incompetency might squander in the space of a few weeks fifty times the amount of his salary for

a year ; surely it is more than folly, — it is madness, it is downright cruelty, to jeopard the intellectual and moral, the present, and it may be the eternal well being *of our children*, by subjecting them to the empiricism of *cheap* teachers. No ; we want for this sublime, this arduous employment, *a good, a competent man, cost what he may.*

This is the sentiment that should pervade a republican community. This is the feeling that must be universal before we can attain that species of education which is essential to national safety, not to speak of what is requisite to secure those large and enduring ends to which we are aspiring. But, alas ! the contrast between the expedient and the actual ! Although it may be proved to demonstration, as above, that supposing the schools to be taught by *permanent* teachers, (and no others can acquire the experience and interest requisite to make them skilful ;) and, supposing these teachers to have families, (and any other expectation is absurd,) New-York cannot possibly provide for the respectable education of her children, with a smaller expenditure than something like three millions and a half a year ; and yet, a very few years since, the whole amount of money paid for teachers' wages, by the people of New-York, was estimated by the superintendent at something like six hundred thousand dollars, or about one sixth the sum proved to be indispensa-

bly necessary as the minimum amount, to procure the permanent services of qualified teachers.

Now, what have been the consequences of this inadequate provision? Let history answer, and by the mouth of their own superintendent, when he appropriates "as peculiarly applicable to his own state," the language of the executive committee of Massachusetts, who declare that the system of education as now supported by law, has but little changed with all the astonishing changes which *half a century* of national independence, of vicissitude from poverty and privation, to public and private prosperity, wealth, and luxury, have produced ;" or, when employing his own language as already quoted, he affirms, that "The *miserable economy* which prevails of *employing cheap teachers* without reference to their fitness, has a tendency to depress, rather than to elevate the standard of education in our common schools."

I flatter myself, enough has been said to prove that our legislative provisions for the support of education have been any thing but liberal; that they have been measured by the dictates of a false economy, and have been altogether insufficient for the ends proposed. But as this is a point of so much practical importance, I shall pursue it in another section. Were I to speak of other states than those that have been mentioned, I might state the fact, that it was once the fortune

of the author to point out the absurdity of a school bill which had been printed by order, and was actually pending before the lower house of one of our legislative bodies, by an arithmetical demonstration, that it proposed to bring the inestimable boon of education within the reach of even the poorest and the stingiest, by reducing the price of tuition to something like twelve and a half cents a scholar per annum !

I was informed, however, by one behind the scenes, that there was concealed beneath this bill an electioneering scheme, to be played off on the multitude prior to the next elections ; and hence, I gather another reason for distrusting an exclusive reliance on legislative efforts in behalf of education. If (as there is but too much cause to apprehend,) the spirit of legislation shall become so prostituted and degraded, that this sacred topic shall be neglected, or attended to, as may subserve the selfish ends of office-seeking, office-keeping lust, does it not become our duty, as Christians and as citizens, to look after its interests ourselves ; to take the matter into our own hands ; to make up our minds deliberately and intelligently as to what had best be done ; and then, instead of trusting longer to the spontaneous action of our legislatures, speak to them in the language of authoritative instruction, which they shall not seek to evade nor disobey ?



## SECTION V.

(CONTINUED.)

Two plans by which the diffusion of education may be effected : — the first, by making it cheap ; the second, by making it good. The former, which is the expedient generally resorted to, is not only unwise, but works its own defeat. — This proved by a reference to the theory and operation of our best and oldest school systems. — Separation of the children of the rich and poor a necessary consequence of the excessive cheapening of education. — This to be avoided only by such liberal remuneration of teachers as will induce men of talents and professional skill to engage in the business. — Impolicy of employing *cheap* teachers. — Better to elevate the taste of the people than lower the price of tuition.

THERE are, as has been already intimated, two methods that may be resorted to for the purpose of diffusing education through a community, in choosing between which, it becomes us to proceed with the utmost caution and deliberation. The first is, to put the price of tuition so low that the poorest parent can afford to pay it ; the second, to induce the people to set so high a value upon education, that they will resolve to have it, *and of a good quality*, regardless of the cost. The former regards the task of providing for the cost of public instruction as being almost exclusively a legislative duty, and narrows it down to a mere financial operation ; the latter contemplates it as a social concern, and looks for the wisdom and efficiency of measures chiefly, if not entirely, to public sentiment.

The first is the expedient which has hitherto been generally adopted, and with what consequences, I have partially pointed out. But I have, by no means, done with the subject. It may be very safely admitted, (though there is good reason to doubt even this,) that upon this principle, what is commonly called education, *may* become more widely disseminated; but on the other hand, there is not ground for the shadow of a misgiving, that its diffusion on this plan induces such a deterioration of its quality as makes it, to say the least, a questionable blessing. It were a very doubtful, as well as unavailing charity, to divide a loaf of spoiled bread among a thousand starving individuals.

This, however, is not all; and I proceed to show respecting it, that it must necessarily fail of attaining one of the noblest ends proposed by a system of national education; and that, with reference to this, it works its own defeat.

Preparatory to this, it will be necessary to state the theory of common school systems in those of the older members of our confederacy, which were the foremost to establish them. In these, the right, policy, and duty of legislative provision for the support of popular education, have from the earliest period been distinctly and practically asserted. To make such provision, the aggregate property of the community has been considered as being at the disposal of the legislature; and

the only question has been, how the public resources could be best employed for its attainment.

The right of suffrage, and the duty of fitting one's self for the judicious use of it, are looked upon as reciprocal and dependent. If a citizen, therefore, have the means, but want the inclination, the authority of the state directly or indirectly compels him to educate his children; whilst those to whom the means are wanting, are to be provided for by taxation of the property of the rich. In short, all the children of the community are regarded as belonging to the state, whilst the entire property of the state, as of a common parent, is made responsible for their education; and the object is, *to assemble in the same elementary schools, on terms of perfect equality, all the children of the rich and poor; thus to place indiscriminately within the reach of all, knowledge, that cardinal element of power, which not only checks but controls all others, and constitutes the only practicable and unexceptionable leveller.*

These are the principles, and this the aim of the common school systems of the states alluded to; but nothing is easier to prove, than that the expedient now under consideration tends directly to produce in schools that very discrimination of the rich and poor, which it has been a primary aim of these systems to prevent, and to accelerate the classification of the members of society according to their wealth.

My appeal is to experience, in support of this assertion. Let any inquirer travel through certain portions of New-England where experience is ripest, in Connecticut for instance, and the existence of this tendency will be made known to him by the acknowledgement and complaint of every intelligent citizen he may meet with. The reasons for this are obvious. Education, in the free schools, by being cheapened in price, has also been so much cheapened in quality, that those who can help themselves will not accept of it even as a gratuity; and, consequently, they provide select private schools for their children, in which, by the payment of liberal salaries, they engage the services of men of talents and attainments.

Nor shall we be surprised at this result, when we reflect that it has followed most naturally upon the preposterous attempt to put intellectual and manual labour upon the same footing as to wages; and, that in numerous cases, the education of young patriots in the school-house is actually undertaken for less pay, than would command the services of carmen in the streets, or knights of the blacking brush in the hotels.

These remarks, however, are applicable to the lauded public schools of our cities, even more emphatically than to the free schools scattered over the country. These are any thing but *republican* in their character. Two very simple questions will decide this point, viz: do the alder-

men and the literary men, who manage and be-  
praise them, send *their* children to these schools?  
or, on the contrary, is it not, for the most part,  
the children of *the poor*, or of the stingy, or of  
those who do not set a proper value upon real  
education, by whom they are frequented? They  
are "excellent schools," — "first-rate schools," —  
"very good schools," — (*for the poor!*)

As for the children of *the rich* and *the aspir-*  
*ing*, you must look elsewhere *for them*, than in  
these intellectual receptacles of pauperism. The  
wealthy merchant, and the high-minded profes-  
sional man, pay most cheerfully their proportion  
of tax towards the support of the public institu-  
tions; but it is evident they regard it either in  
the light of a benevolent contribution, or as a  
matter of social expediency; for instead of avail-  
ing themselves, as they might, of the opportunity  
thus created for the economical education of  
their children, in *these* "excellent schools," they  
send them to "select" private schools, conducted  
by highly qualified instructors, who have but a  
*few pupils*, for each of whom they receive from  
fifty to a hundred dollars a year tuition.

It is a fact full of instruction, and warning, that  
in most, if not in all our cities where public  
schools have been established, from two to four  
times the amount is paid to private teachers for  
the instruction of *a few*, that is levied upon prop-

erty, for the maintenance of the public seminaries where *the many* are instructed.

By the eighteenth annual report of the controllers of public schools of the city and county of Philadelphia, there were gathered into these schools somewhat over 13,000 children, for whose tuition were paid about \$40,000 ; or, *not quite four dollars a scholar* ! Now I am sure, I hazard nothing by asserting, in the absence of positive information, that it would be an easy matter to find in the city of Philadelphia, one-thirteenth of this number of children, for whose instruction a much larger sum is annually paid.

In the public schools in the city of Louisville, there were by the report of 1835, seven hundred and twenty children, taught by eight teachers, whose aggregate wages amounted to \$5,700, making the annual cost of instruction, for each pupil, something under \$8. And yet, I know that two schools alone, out of a number on the independent basis, could have been pointed out, in which, fifty boys, most of them quite small, paid within a trifle of this sum.

In the public schools of the city of New-York, (the year before last if I mistake not,) there were instructed 14,105 children at an expense of something like \$90,000 ; or, less than \$6 50 a scholar ; whilst 1,500 at \$60, or 1125 at \$80, or only 900 at \$100, (which are by no means uncommon prices,) would pay as much !

Now surely this inequality must be wrong on one side or the other. If the allowance of \$60, \$80, or \$100, a year for tuition, is not the consummation of extravagance, where shall we find terms to express our ideas of that mistaken economy, which reduces the price of tuition to \$8, as in Louisville, or to \$4, as in Philadelphia, or to \$6 50, as in the city of New-York, for the purpose of bringing the advantages of education within the reach of the mass of the children in society?

The higher price is voluntarily paid, that the parent may secure to his child the services of a superior teacher, who shall bind himself to attend to a small number of pupils. But if these conditions are requisite for good instruction, (which is certainly as desirable for the many, as for the few,) it is impossible that a teacher can attain this end, no matter what his qualifications, when overburdened with fifty, eighty, and sometimes even a hundred pupils. Supposing the teachers to be on a perfect equality as to professional qualifications, (which, however, would contradict a settled principle in political economy,) there still must be a vast difference in the results, in consequence of the difference of attention which each pupil can receive. Education, in the private schools, cannot fail of being superior to that received in the public schools; and when we recollect that "knowledge is power," and that mind will govern, what possible cause can produce so

marked discriminations in society, as that, on which we theoretically rely for breaking down or neutralizing the most stubborn of distinctions? The only possible way in which this separation of the children of the rich and poor, and the existence of two sets of schools, Plebeian and Patrician, can be prevented, is to make the public schools such as will satisfy the rich; in short, the best that can be had. To accomplish this, it is indispensable that it be made the interest of men of talents to fit themselves for the business of instruction as their profession; and there is but one conceivable way in which this can be done, viz: by allowing a liberal remuneration for their services. It is a law, admitting as few exceptions as any other, that labour always tends to the highest wages; and that the quality of the workman and consequently of the work, bears a direct relation to the magnitude of the pay. Men will not work for nothing; and teachers surrounding themselves with families, have no right to do so, more than other classes of men. The following language of the Christian Examiner, used originally with reference to a different, but kindred profession, is peculiarly applicable to that of instruction.

“Public opinion has pressed upon members of this profession in such a manner that many have lost in a measure the sense of *duty* which they owe their social relations. No impression is more common, than that if they can be barely supported,



it is all they have any reason or right to expect. That is to say — all idea of acquiring property from their calling is with most of them out of the question from the very first. If the annual salary pay the expenses of the year, they are to be content. Now this way of thinking is utterly wrong in conscience and in duty. A man has no right to surround himself with a class of beings entirely dependent upon the thread of his life, not to say these are his children, beings dearer to him than life, and whom every law of God and nature give a most absolute claim upon him — he would have no right to take beggars from the hedge, and treat them so.

I dwell upon this subject because of its fundamental importance. Society may blame itself; its own false notions of economy, for the defective education under which it groans. That it is imperfect, none pretend to deny; but, even were it more so, the community would still receive a full equivalent for the pitiful remuneration begrudged to its conductors. The only proper cause for wonder is, that it is so good. Instructors of youth feel that talents and professional skill are property, for which, when used for others' benefit, they deserve to be paid, — and in doing so, they but think and feel as human beings. Good education, like all other valuable products of human industry, has its natural price, which is fixed by uncontrollable principles; and the only alternative with

a community, whether acting directly, or through its legislative representatives, is, to have it on these terms, or not at all. Nothing is clearer than that there exists a general wish to have it below its natural cost ; and society itself needs to be informed in the plainest terms of the futility of all such expectations ; for legislation, more than any other *immediate* cause, has contributed to the existence of wrong impressions and practice on this subject, and cannot be expected to apply the corrective to evils which it perseveringly upholds.

I confess, my hopes for the improvement of education, bear an exact proportion to the advance in the prices of tuition. The mercurial fluid is not more obedient to variations of atmospheric temperature. That there exists a favourable tendency in this respect, I firmly believe ; and I hail with joy every indication of its progress as a most auspicious omen of better things. To this I fondly trust for the rapid intellectual advancement, at no distant day, of the south and south-west portions of our Union. Possessing in profusion the means of education, and inclined not merely to a liberal, but a prodigal expenditure to gratify their wishes, they have only to learn the best method of employing it for the attainment of real happiness, both personal and social ; and the moral power of money, when judiciously applied, will soon receive from them a new and striking illustration. Kentucky, for example, were she only aware of

her advantages in this respect, (and her recent movements show that she will not always remain blind to her best interests,) might, in the language of one of the ripest scholars of New-England respecting her, "at no distant period boast of the most enlightened population in the new world ; and have her example looked up to with respect and deference not only by the states beyond the Allegany, but by all who border on the Atlantic Ocean." In New-York, and throughout New-England generally, the prices of tuition, (I refer to the free schools,) must advance at least four-fold, before they shall have reached their natural height ; and many, many years I fear will have elapsed, before the minds of the people can be so far liberalized, and enlightened, as to make them willing that the cost of education shall be quadrupled upon them.

In Kentucky, on the contrary, the general practice, and still more the popular sentiment, is fully up to the demands of the natural law upon this subject. I should not greatly err, were I to say that the average price of tuition throughout the state does not vary much from ten dollars a year, a pupil. At this rate, it is only requisite to assemble forty scholars in a school, and a salary of four hundred dollars is provided for the teachers of common schools ; a sum which is not unfrequently accepted in New-England, by college graduates, who obtain situations in academies. Certainly,

then, I do not overrate the advantages which may be enjoyed by Kentucky in this respect, (if she will only be wise enough to use them,) since the customary rates of tuition are such as may engage in the instruction of her A B C scholars a grade of talent, which at the north is employed in fitting young men for college.

All that is wanting in Kentucky, is, *that all the people be induced to send their children to school.* The rates of tuition are reasonably high at present, and are decidedly advancing. Twelve, sixteen, and even twenty dollars are not at all uncommon prices in country schools where the studies rise above the ordinary branches. Only let her Legislature then devise some measures by which to induce a general attendance at school of the children of the State, *without a material diminution of these rates of tuition*, and Kentucky may win the enviable distinction of having the best public school system in the Union.

The almost unprecedented liberality of the city of Louisville, in this respect, deserves to be universally known, that she may attract to herself that competition of superior teachers which her conduct richly merits. A city that within two years will advance the prices of tuition as she did, from forty dollars as a maximum, almost to forty dollars, as a minimum; making fifty, sixty, eighty, and a hundred dollars common prices, deserves, as she cannot fail in time to enjoy, the ser-

vices of the very best teachers in the land. Such liberality would soon create good teachers in any numbers if they did not already exist; even attracting talent from the crowded professions of law and medicine.

The true and fundamental reason why the business of teaching is in so degraded a condition, is, that it is so badly paid. Only let it be put upon a proper footing in this particular, and it will be one of the most inviting employments in the world. No wonder it is in disrepute, when society suffers, or rather constrains it to be in such a condition that it scarcely suggests any other ideas to the mind of the aspiring youth when meditating what profession he shall follow, than those of starvation, drudgery, and disgrace. Let it however become appreciated and rewarded as it should be; let society be brought to feel that its amusements, dress, any thing, and every thing, in short, must be selected as the objects of economical retrenchment, sooner than the minds and hearts of their offspring, and it will not be long before we shall see colleges for educating teachers springing up in every state, and crowds of talented competitors pressing forward to an employment, which, I repeat with equal sincerity and emphasis is, under chosen circumstances, one of the most dignified, useful, and delightful upon earth. Only let the skeptical on this point think of the

real position which the teacher occupies; that to him are delegated all the fascinating duties of parental love; that he becomes an auxiliary in the animating task of training the immortal spirit for usefulness on earth, and happiness in Heaven; let him remember, that *his business is exclusively with mind*, with the affections as well as with the understanding; let him consider, too, that the instructor of youth has more leisure by far than any other calling affords; that he has generally one-twelfth, if not one-sixth, of the entire year, vacation; that of the remainder, two-sevenths, or two whole days in each week are devoted to rest; and that even on the five school days he is not employed professionally more than one-half the hours of daylight; let him, I say, give due weight to these considerations, and he will be prepared to acquiesce in the assertion, that the only reason why the employment of the schoolmaster is considered irksome is, that society does not render a proper compensation for his services; that he himself has not right conceptions of its nature, its pleasures, and its duties; and above all, because he does not fit himself by a deliberate, thorough, professional education, for an easy, pleasant, and productive performance of its various offices.

I cannot fancy to myself a more inviting and endearing relation, than that which the qualified instructor has it in his power to establish with their families, as well as with the children themselves

committed to his charge. He may become the intimate, the confidential, friend of each ; identifying himself with their dearests interests. Almost forgetting that his pupils have any other parents, he may get to look upon them as his own. He may share their sports, sympathize with their little troubles, lighten their labour by judicious help, exult in their manifestations of expanding intellect, be cheered by their smiles, animated by their love, live in their earthly hopes, and be thrilled with the transporting anticipation of witnessing in a better world the ceaseless progress of that education which he had commenced in this.

I envy not that teacher his conceptions, and his feelings, in relation to his office, who can coldly call this fiction. I covet not his experience, if he have not tasted sufficiently of the delights portrayed, to induce him to believe, that under better auspices, the whole may yet be realized.

And is it not the interest of society, (to say nothing of duty to their children,) to provide men capable of appreciating this relation, and every way equal to the refined and noble labours it enjoins ? If so, let it be carefully borne in mind, there is but one way of effecting it — *they must first educate, and then maintain them.*

It would be difficult to select a case in which the law — “like produces like,” — is more exactly verified, than in the work of education. As is the teacher, so of necessity almost will be the scholar ;

and if it be true that as is the pay, so is the teacher, it surely is unwise, if not unkind, to entail upon our children the curse of miseducation, (an evil that admits no remedy,) in obedience to the dictates of a false economy. A Roman sage was once requested by a rich but parsimonious citizen, to state the price for which he would educate his son. "For so much," was the answer. "I could buy a slave to teach him for that," replied the father. "Do so," said the philosopher, "and you will have two."

Were further testimony wanted to support the doctrine I am maintaining, I might refer to the instructive experience of the eastern states.

Look for instance at the schools of Boston, the pride of that literary capital. At the head of these institutions, public and private, you will find gentlemen of the first respectability for talents and acquirements; almost without exception, college graduates; some of whom have even abandoned the professions of medicine and law, for that of teaching. And why? The answer is obvious. *Because it was made their interest.* The salaries of those engaged in the service of the city, vary from eight to twenty-five hundred dollars per annum; whilst many of the proprietors of private schools, receive eighty and one hundred dollars a year for tuition, from each of eighty, one hundred, and in some cases of one hundred and fifty pupils.

Contrast with this the state of things in Connec-



ticut, where, about the time of thanksgiving, the roads will be lined with young cultivators of the soil, who not being able to find, in winter, employment for their hands, itinerate the country, vending the services of their heads to the highest bidder, and accepting of salaries of from eight to twenty dollars a month !

In the one case, you will find a proud and honourable satisfaction with their schools. In the other, universal complaint, societies for the improvement of common schools, petitions to the legislature for reform, a dissatisfaction with the effects of their fund almost amounting to a wish for its annihilation, a drain of scholars from the public to the private schools, and the aristocracy of wealth, fortifying itself by becoming an aristocracy in literature.

These representations, so far from operating against the interests of the poor, are expressly designed and calculated to promote them. If it be true that "knowledge is power," and that there is a dependent connexion between liberal salaries and the employment of talents, — and between the employment of talents and *good* education, whose fruit is knowledge, — how, I would ask, can the unsuspected ascendancy of the rich be more effectually secured, than by putting off the poor in means, with the present of a poor education ? Only allow the rich, (no matter under what pretext ; whether of philanthropy, or patriotism, or of inte-

rest,) to *prescribe the education of the poor*, and they prescribe their condition and relative importance. If any thing be anti-republican, it certainly is so, directly or indirectly, to maintain that although a hundred dollars a year is not too much to be expended for the mental improvement of the son of the wealthy merchant, lawyer, and physician; a two or three dollar education, (the estimated cost of public school instruction at the east, is quite sufficient for the children of the poor, or rather for the mass of our fellow-citizens.

I think it perfectly manifest, therefore, that if the aggregate property of the community is so far a common fund, that it is responsible for the instruction of all its children; then it is peculiarly the interest of the poor, that the education imparted should be of the very best character; for if a liberal expenditure of funds be necessary to secure it, it is not from them, but from the property and property holders of the country, that these funds must be obtained.

It were a sufficient objection to the pseudo-economic scheme that it helps the rich as well as the poor. But it does far more than this; for while it tends materially to the *pecuniary* relief of the rich, it operates essentially to the *moral injury* of the poor, by lessening the value of the education provided for their children, designating them as a class, and ensuring permanently their relative inferiority, by debarring them the benefits

of that liberal mental culture which alone can enable them to rise superior to their condition.

On the other hand, if a common school system be adopted, in which a large amount of money accruing from taxation is expended indiscriminately for the benefit of all, it is obvious, that while the intellectual and moral fruits are far more valuable, the burden of expense falls chiefly on the rich. And so it should. They have a pecuniary interest in the prevalence of good morals and intelligence in society which causes them to receive in indirect returns, more than an equivalent for all the money they expend to promote the cause of education. They are not benefactors ; nor should the poor regard themselves as beneficiaries in this case, any more than in the application of these principles to provide for the civil and military expenses of the government.

Far be it from me to insinuate that our present schemes of popular instruction originated in so knavish and ignoble a purpose ; but it is clear that if the property holders of the country had desired to devise a plan by which, with the least possible tax upon their purses, the poor should be made satisfied with the semblance of education ; a more ingenious and effectual stratagem could not have been invented, than that which legislation has inadvertently furnished to their hands. There is a stubborn relation between quality and price which holds of education as of every thing else. Univer-

sally, workmanship will be good or bad, according to the remuneration of the operatives. And since the chief cost of education is for tuition, and as the only way of cheapening this is to reduce the pay of teachers, it is self-evident, that a resort to this expedient must raise an effectual bar to the employment of talents ; and that the consequences will be visited chiefly upon the poor ; for the children of the rich will instantly take refuge in the private schools conducted by masters of professional ability.

I no less confidently believe, that to enhance the cost of education so as to bring it to the natural standard, would impose no material hindrance to its diffusion. On the contrary, I indulge the strongest hopes that its tendency would be directly the reverse ; and that the most effectual mode of securing the general spread of education would be, *to elevate its standard by the employment of none but teachers of superior qualifications.* Education, at their hands, would soon come to be regarded as a token of distinction which every parent would covet for his children. In times when it was considered an honour for kings and cardinals to read, it inflicted no disgrace upon a commoner not to know his letters ; but so soon as this attainment got to be common in society, the want of it became, in the highest degree, disreputable, and then every body learned to read. At present, in many parts of our country,

the fruits of education are so indifferent, as to excite but little solicitude for their enjoyment. When a year or two's attendance upon school makes a man write so indifferent a hand that he is ashamed to attempt the drafting a receipt; and gives him so slight a knowledge of arithmetic; that he is afraid to trust himself to make the most ordinary calculation; we need not be surprised to hear the illiterate declare, "they do not see what they are to gain by sending their children to school, since they make just as good corn and hay, plough, and cut wood, just as well without knowing a letter in the book."

There is no room to wonder that the people seem indifferent to that, whose value is so ambiguous, and which is seen to confer so little of honour or of profit. Under existing circumstances, in many of our states, the difference is so trivial between the man who has spent some time at school, and him who has never entered one, as to excite but little satisfaction in the one, or uneasiness in the other. But only let the advantages of education be made so obvious, (by the employment of able teachers,) that intelligence shall become a badge of honourable distinction, and very soon ignorance will be regarded as a mark of disgrace, with which no parent who can help it will permit his children to be branded.

In such a state of things, the only question necessary to be asked, is, are the people generally able to educate their children? And to this it

must be answered, that in nine cases out of ten, they are, if they can only be induced to set such a value upon education as shall make them willing, by economizing upon furniture, on dress, and various superfluities, to provide the means for conferring its inestimable blessings on their offspring. Of our ability, as a nation, to educate our children, and to educate them well, there is no question. The money that is annually squandered upon vicious pleasures would more than pay the difference between the demands of good and bad instructors. I question if the single article of ardent spirits did not, some years back, cost the republic quite as large a sum as she paid in tuition fees for all her children.

It can then never be too much regretted, that in providing the means for general instruction, the people should have been encouraged to depend on legislative aid *as a measure of relief*; to station themselves, like beggars, at the door of *their own treasury*, uttering the incessant cry of give, give, as though they were the merest objects of charity, and the legislature had an independent fund from which to dispense, at pleasure, its donations.

Were it in the power of our legislators to give pecuniary relief to their constituents, there might then be some pretext for this humiliating dependence; but they cannot afford a particle. They can give the people nothing, for the best of reasons; they have nothing of their own to give.

The utmost they can do is to vote away the people's contributions. The appropriations which they make from funds, or otherwise, are not the less taxation, because indirect. Nor can they reduce the natural cost of education. Instructors will not labour *for less than a support, because paid by the state* instead of the parents of their pupils; nor will it take less to support them in this case.

We are forced then, irresistibly, to the conclusion, that if we would enjoy the advantages of genuine education, *we must pay its price*; and that, where a people are able to pay this, *it is better to elevate their taste, than to lower the wages of instruction*. I most firmly believe that every thing may be achieved by inducing the people to set a proper estimate upon the worth of education; and that little or nothing can be done without this. *Only let them be brought to appreciate it as they ought, and they will not only be willing, but will either find, or by economy and industry will create the means with which to pay for it.*

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## SECTION VI.

THE last of the seven propositions laid down in the beginning of this chapter, in relation to the essential features of a national system of education

sued to the United States, is, that "for the supervision and general execution of its plans, it must appoint wise and energetic superintendents."

The expediency and simplicity of such an arrangement are so obvious, that it is scarcely necessary to enter into details, either for the sake of illustration, or of proof; and as I shall have to allude to it again in a subsequent part of this volume, I pass it by for the present.



## CHAPTER IV.

### OF THE PRACTICABILITY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION.

#### SECTION I.

Proofs of the practicability of such a system of national education as is required by the United States. 1. It is practicable, because it is the will of God that every human being should receive such an education as it proposes. 2. Because every child possesses a native right to it. 3. Because the great obstacle to its execution is, not the want of ability, but popular indifference, a moral hinderance which may be removed by the force of moral causes. 4. Because its practicability is assumed by the Christian religion, and by our political constitutions.

If the reasoning in the Second Chapter of this volume be correct, we cannot escape the conviction, that the American people, in order to be prosperous and happy, must be *a religious people*; that governments such as ours, are safe and practicable only in alliance with a popular morality emanating solely from the Bible; and that the general prevalence of public virtue, of a genuine sort, can be secured in no other way than by educating the moral as well as the intellectual faculties, and by forming the moral character of the

children of our country upon Christian principles. The genius of our governments, and especially the critical condition of the country, imperatively call for a system of national education which shall strictly harmonize with the great requirement of inspiration — “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and mind and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself.”

、 We want an education which shall make each voter go to the polls under a deep sense of religious responsibility ; conscious, as when lifting his hand in solemn asseveration at the bar of justice, that the eye of the Omniscient is upon him ; and that his motives, and his vote, will undergo a strict revision when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed. We want a system of education which shall reform our corrupt and corrupting system of electioneering ; which shall make the candidate for office rest his claims upon his character, his talents, his knowledge, and his experience ; which shall prepare the poor and the necessitous to spurn the offer of a bribe, and to record their detestation of the vice, as well as of the tempter, in the poll book ; which shall embolden the day labourer to quit the spindle or the plough and to give his voice, if duty bid him, against the election of his rich employer ; which shall make the apartment where the suffrages of the people are recorded, a court of conscience, in which private interest, personal predilections, and relationship, are cheerfully

sacrificed to a supreme regard for principle, and the general welfare of the country ; which shall restrain the excesses of party spirit ; shall encourage submission to law, and a cheerful acquiescence in the will of the majority. In short, we want an education whose tendency shall be to make every man industrious in his calling, honest in his dealings, and benevolent in his disposition : a judicious father, a good neighbour and a virtuous, high-minded, patriotic citizen.

The application of the doctrines of the Third Chapter would call for a thorough revolution in the system of education now prevalent among us ; requiring that the process of *intellectual* culture be conducted with a primary regard to the formation of those mental habits which shall qualify each person to become a safe, discriminating, accurate, productive, independent thinker ; at the same time that it would impart to each pupil an *elementary* knowledge of such branches of science as would make him acquainted with his physical, intellectual, and moral constitution ; with the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms of nature ; and with the duties, and privileges, growing out of his relation to the family, the neighbourhood, his country, and his God.

To bestow such an education upon all the children of the nation, it would be necessary to prepare, by appropriate professional training, upwards of fifty thousand teachers : and to secure

the permanent services of these, there must be raised something like twenty-five millions of dollars annually in the United States, and this in such a way as to cause the burden to fall lightly on the poor, at the same time that it carefully and utterly avoids the odious designation of their children as a class.

The question which relates to the *practicability* of such a system of national education is one of the most important that can occupy the attention of American citizens. I come now to the consideration of this question, and in answer to the inquiry — *is such a system practicable?* — give my response most cordially and emphatically in the affirmative; and proceed at once to assign the reasons for this opinion.

I would premise that there are two ways in which this subject may be discussed, or, that there are two kinds of argument which may be employed; the first, consisting of abstract reasoning founded on elementary principles and facts; the second, of a statement of measures suitable and sufficient to effect the end desired. I shall employ both these methods; devoting the present section to the first of them.

My first reason, then, for believing in the practicability of such a system of national education as I have attempted to sketch, is founded upon the fact that God has made it obligatory upon parents and upon society to bestow on every child

the kind and amount of education which this system calls for.

I assume it as a universal proposition whose correctness it would be unnecessary if not wrong to attempt to support by argument, that the Almighty never imposes on us an obligation, nor requires the performance of a duty, when obedience is not practicable, provided the aids, facilities and guidance which he promises, are properly made use of. He has solemnly enjoined it upon parents that they train up their children in the way they should go, that they bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and I therefore believe it can be effected, if not in all cases by the father or mother, yet invariably by society, which, in cases of parental inability, succeeds to the parental obligation.

Another reason for believing in the practicability of national education properly so called, is, that such a system is in harmony with the natural rights of man; and because it implies a gross reflection upon Providence to maintain that their observance and gratification are impossible.

By just so much as the soul is superior to the body, would I rather believe that starvation in hundreds of thousands of cases every year was unavoidable in this land of plenty, than that, for any providential reason, the minds of more than half the children of our country should run to waste, because of the impossibility of giving them an education. If there be in this world of proba-

tion an unhappy individual who by the force of circumstances beyond the control of man is utterly debarred the prospect of that spiritual culture which shall prepare him for acting well his part in life, and fit his soul for Heaven; then in the sacred name of charity, let him remain as profoundly ignorant as possible of the dignity of his nature, and of the hopelessness of his condition. It is cruel to awaken hopes and aspirations which we know at the very time can never be gratified. It were mercy to such a wretch to seal up all the avenues to his spirit, to cut off all the sources of information, to repress the faintest rising of desire, and thus to let him enjoy the pittance of negative felicity which ignorance vouchsafes to him. He is any thing but a benefactor who shall apprise him of his hopeless slavery.

But we may rest assured that *the Almighty* imposes no such necessity, as is here alluded to. That it does exist; that there are hundreds, and thousands, who, by the power of the circumstances in which they are involuntarily placed, seem to be shut out from the glorious career of improvement that invites immortal beings, testimony in a profusion which is painful, constrains us to acknowledge; but, that such is the ordination of infinite benevolence, I will not, nay, I cannot believe. Providence dooms no man's spirit to irremediable servitude. He does not provoke his children to envy the very brutes which perish. No—the

disabilities which exist in regard to universal education are of our own creating. That a state of society incompatible with the intellectual and moral culture of all its members, does exist, we must admit. But it is of human origin. We have chosen to put things on a footing contrary to the wishes of our Heavenly Father. We have organized society on principles at war with those established by our Maker. In this respect "the foundations of the earth are out of course." But are we therefore exonerated from our responsibility to execute the designs, and conform to the purposes of the Creator? Every human being has a native, untransferable right to education, and it is obviously the intention of the Almighty that he should receive it. The bestowment of this blessing on all is therefore practicable, and the fault is man's if if they do not enjoy it.

But such are our business demands for time, and such our love of money, that we try to persuade ourselves we are not able to afford the necessary means (and leisure, when in truth we are only unwilling. If there is justice in the proposition, that the aggregate wealth of a nation constitutes the fund pledged for the education of its children, we have only to look at our commercial and manufacturing statistics, to find, in less than a moiety of what we pay for a very few luxuries which might be specified, a fund amply sufficient for all the purposes of national education.

That the difficulty of procuring means is a very serious obstacle in the way of education ; that it is the only formidable hinderance I grant. But what is the reason ? It is not because we do not possess them. The history of every year shows that we have millions upon millions to expend ; but a perverted national taste inclines us to expend them for the purpose of satisfying artificial wants, rather than to procure the invaluable benefits of education to the children of our country.

And can we, in such a case, institute the plea of *impracticability*, as an apology for our neglect ? This can be appropriated only in cases where there is the want of ability or means, not where there is merely the want of inclination. A rich miser probably enough may lack *inclination* to pay his tax to government ; but will this be construed into inability to pay ? Will he be excused from payment on the ground of its being impracticable ? It is a strange view of morals which tortures disinclination to perform a duty into an excuse for not performing it. Ordinarily and correctly, it is regarded as an aggravation of the fault.

The truth is, that as a nation, we are without the shadow of apology for the state of education among us. The money we spend for tobacco and whisky alone, not to name genteeler luxuries, is more than sufficient to educate our children. We possess the means in abundance, and if we would



only appropriate them, all other difficulties would melt away like dew before the summer's sun. With what face, then, can we affirm that national education is impracticable? Who can state too strongly the inconsistency, not to say the wickedness, of ascribing to uncontrollable providential arrangements, what is wholly attributable to a corruption of the national taste? Let us only be prevailed upon to set a proper estimate on the relative value of sensual and moral gratifications, and we shall soon discover that infinite wisdom and benevolence have not been guilty of the absurdity of conferring rights which can never be enjoyed; of imparting susceptibilities that cannot be cultivated; of bestowing powers which can never be employed; of implanting desires that can never be gratified; and of imposing duties which we are unable to discharge.

From these representations, it is obvious that the real hinderances to education in the United States are of a moral character, and may therefore be overcome by the application of moral means. This affords another very encouraging reason to believe in the practicability of national education.

Were our condition that of Hottentots, who may not have one cultivated mind to act upon the rest,—or that of savages, who can scarcely obtain the necessaries of life,—general education would, I grant, be morally and financially impracticable.

But we have surplus talent in abundance soliciting employment ; and our national statistics show that there is no lack of money, first to educate it for the business of instruction, and then to secure its services by the offer of liberal remuneration. With us, therefore, I repeat, *the question is not one of means.* It is a pure case of competition between parental affection and patriotism on the one hand, and sensual gratifications on the other ; — between wine, tobacco, whisky, ribbons, silks, and other luxuries, and the present and immortal interests of our children ; — and I think too well of my species, and of my fellow-citizens, to indulge the apprehension for a moment, that when the case is fairly stated, the decision will not be a wise and salutary one. I believe we love our children and our country far better than we love our money ; and, that when the criminal absurdity of our present conduct shall be properly exposed, the hoarding principle will be obliged to relax its iron grasp.

If it were already true that the love of wealth, and of luxurious indulgence, had fastened itself impregnably upon the soul of the nation, why then I grant we might, with some show of plausibility, indulge despair ; but who is prepared to make so humiliating a concession ? Besides, what effort has been made to dethrone the tyrannical passion that has been starving the souls of our countrymen ? We cannot wonder that the spirit

of the nation does not instinctively and revoltingly throw off an incubus which the patriot and the philanthropist, aye, and the Christian too, have quietly endured till very recently. When such sacred interests are at stake, it is worse than pusillanimous to complain of the impracticability of effecting that which we have not attempted.

The right of covetousness to almost universal sway has just begun to be disputed; and it is premature and cowardly, to own at the very opening of the contest that its power is invincible.

The pulpit has scarce begun to thunder in the ears of money-loving Christians, (if such a misnomer can be tolerated,) that "idolatry" is the synonyme of the passion which enslaves them; and that one and the same place will be assigned to "fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, thieves, the covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners;" — and the all-subduing power of "the love of Christ" is but just directing the attention of his true disciples to the heavenly maxim, "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

The political economist, too, is just entering the field with his demonstrations of the fact that EDUCATION IS WEALTH, and that avarice is a passion as blind as it is grovelling. The efficacy of this appeal to enlightened selfishness, — of this oblation to the ruling passion of the land, — is but beginning to be tested; and I confidently predict, there resides in it a power which is to achieve

wonders for the moral benefit of our country and our race.

Nor has the historian yet come forward with that most desirable piece of moral history, — the history of wealth in the United States. This, when frankly written by an honest hand, must exhibit the thrilling facts, that in a large majority of cases the prospect of a fortune is a curse; and that the gaming-room, the brothel, and the grog-shop, are the final reservoirs, if not of a moiety, yet certainly of a very large proportion of the hoarded riches of this nation. Such an exhibition could not fail to induce parents to reconsider the question as to the best method of investing a fortune intended for a child, and this as certainly would lead to a conclusion highly favourable to the interests of education. Let us look at this a moment.

Let us suppose that an individual, arrived at maturity, and observing the relation which cultivated mind sustains to respectability and efficiency in life, were called upon to decide the question, whether he would prefer to receive \$20,000 with a stinted education, or only \$10,000 with a liberal, judicious education, can we imagine that he could hesitate a moment to determine? If parents therefore would spend the money designed for their children, in the way which their children themselves would infinitely prefer they should have done when they come to enjoy

it, then let them spend it even lavishly for the purposes of intellectual and moral culture.

Or let us suppose that education were an article of ordinary traffic which could be acquired or alienated in a moment for a monied consideration, and then ask, what sum of money would induce the well educated man, whose patrimony had been exhausted in obedience to this policy, to part with his education, on the condition that he should remain as ignorant as the uneducated for the balance of his life? Could all the pebbles which line the bottom of the ocean be converted into diamonds, they would not be sufficient to purchase it. He feels that he has been put in possession of that which is above all price. Of its value, a pecuniary estimate cannot be made.

Now, I ask in sober earnest, in the name of common sense, as well as of duty and humanity, is there any other mode of investing money for our descendants half so desirable and profitable as this? And then, too, it is an indestructible investment. Money may perish in the fluctuations incident to stocks; landed property may depreciate in value, or be swallowed up by an earthquake; wealth in all its forms is notoriously uncertain, and may "take wings and fly away as an eagle towards Heaven;" but that which is expended in the cultivation of the mind, is placed beyond the reach of accident. It constitutes an

investment that cannot be alienated, and is as imperishable as the soul itself.

Oh ! if parents would but entertain these views, and act them out ; if they would but restrain the hoarding principle within due limits, or give to this propensity its right direction, how different a state of things would soon exist ! A moiety, nay, a tythe, of the surplus wealth of our country, spent judiciously upon the education of its youth, would soon relieve us of our pressing social ills, allay the current apprehensions in regard to our national prospects, and decide forever the question about the practicability of self-government. Let the entire youth of but a single generation be educated as they should be from infancy to manhood, in body, heart, and mind, and the golden age of the poets would soon cease to be regarded as a fiction, the Millenium of the Bible would speedily be realized.

Oh my countrymen ! when will you awake to a consideration of these things, and to a knowledge of your true interests, and dignity, and duty ? The hopes of other nations, as well as other generations, are entrusted to your care. Would you approve yourselves worthy of the trust ? Know then, assuredly, that by the appropriate education of your youth and in no other way, you may discharge your every obligation. Only perform this duty as you ought, and “ generations yet unborn will call you blessed.” By all then

that is sacred in your duty to your children, by all that is binding on the score of patriotism, and by all the claims of degraded, suffering humanity, I pray you not to sacrifice the priceless interests committed to your care, in obedience to the mandates of a sordid thirst for gain ! Your children, and your country, are too dear a sacrifice to offer on the altar of this Moloch !

Another reason for believing in the practicability of a system of education which shall embrace all the children of the nation, and shall address itself to all the faculties, moral as well as intellectual, of every child, giving at the same time such an amount and variety of elementary knowledge, as, by the additions each one shall be fitted to make by his own exertions, will prepare him for the business and the duties of life, is, that its practicability is recognised by our religion, and by the theory of our political institutions.

There is a sophistical inconsistency in the reasoning of those who maintain the impossibility of making a comparatively liberal education universal, or even general, which it is very important, and happily, very easy to expose. They almost invariably reason as if the demand originated with the visionary enthusiasts, as they consider them, against whose airy dreams they fancy themselves to be contending. It is high time that the fact should be placed in such prominent relief as no longer to be capable of being overlooked, that

this demand is imperatively made by our boasted institutions, religious and political, *by our common Christianity, and our common republicanism.* If there be in the belief that society has it in its power to give *to every member* such an education, physical, intellectual, moral, and religious, as will fit him to act his part upon the theatre of life with credit to himself, and benefit to others, aught that is visionary or fanatical, then the blame of its existence belongs, not to the advocate of human improvement, but to the Bible, and to the Declaration of Independence. These both assume the practicability of such education as that for which I contend ; nor are the ends of either attainable without it. If the former is not practicable, then the aims of these are not practicable.

The great moral struggle which is going on at present in the world, is the struggle for empire between precedent and principle. Hitherto, — that is, till quite a recent period, — men *inherited* the opinions and customs, as certainly as they inherited the features and the traits of character, of their parents ; hence, the world went on in the torpid, dull routine of imitation ; every thing being prescribed, and no one dreaming of his being a slave, nor thinking of a deviation from the beaten track : *then* reflection, and consequently education, was unnecessary. It is perfectly easy and natural for brutes, with halters to their heads, to follow the footsteps of their leaders ; but, since Martin



Luther, and the fathers of our revolution, apprized mankind *that they had minds and rights*, the moral attitude of society has been changed : the passive monotony of ages has been broken up, — and now people are obliged to think ; for, amidst the endless diversity of conflicting views and guides soliciting their approbation, they know not whom nor what to follow. The “ war of opinions ” has commenced ; and it is a conflict in which the circumstances and spirit of the age compel every man to join ; it is a struggle in which neutrality is out of the question. There is no such thing as being passive ; he who attempts to be so knows not what moment he may become the foot-ball of the designing or the ignorant.

Republican institutions have had an analytical effect upon society, reducing masses to their constituent elements, *individualizing* communities, and placing every man upon the footing of an independent, personally responsible agent. If each and all can be prepared by proper education to act well their parts in this respect, then these institutions, however severe the trial to which they shall be subjected, may survive and flourish ; but if not, — if the people of the present generation shall be found to be correct in the impression which they seem to entertain, that their revolutionary sires were deluded in relying, as they did, upon the assumed practicability of a saving and exalting national education, then the reader and the writer

of these pages may yet live to hear the exultations of the monarchist, and the wailings of republicans, over the downfall of our blood-bought institutions.

Our holy religion, too, no less than our republican governments, recognises men as individuals. Jesus invariably approached them as such: and the uniform tenour of the language of all the inspired writers is, we "*speak as unto wise men; judge ye what we say;*" and "*be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.*" Now, if indeed a universal, rational, liberal system of education, such as will fit men to be "*wise,*" to "*judge*" and "*reason,*" be impracticable, what shall we say of the prospects of a religion whose successful application depends upon the execution of injunctions such as these?

How strangely inconsistent oftentimes is human reason! We boast of the glorious prospects of our religious and political institutions, whilst, at the very time, we seem to doubt the feasibility of that kind of education which is essential to give them effect and to preserve them: that is, we believe *the end is certain, but the means impracticable!*

I feel disposed and authorized to demand of those who doubt the feasibility of liberal, popular education, that they take a position and adhere to it. I ask them then distinctly the question, can the people at large,—*I mean the farmers, the*

*mechanics, and the labourers of the country*,—be made capable of that reflection and research which are requisite to the formation of correct opinions? If they can, then the tyranny is equalled only by the impolicy of debarring them that measure and kind of education which is essential to qualify them for their exercise. If not, then let it be avowed on all occasions, and in all its bearings, as well in relation to the practicability of our republican form of government, as in regard to that extended education of all the people, which is its best,—its only support. We cannot deny that these sustain to each other the relation of cause and effect,—of foundation and superstructure. Consistently with our republican creed, we are obliged to admit that the people may be appropriately educated, or to maintain that Washington, and all our wisest and worthiest statesmen have been wrong in supposing knowledge and virtue, the fruits of education, to be essential as safeguards of our liberties; or to be guilty of the still greater absurdity of supposing that intelligence in our latitude and longitude will come without exertion: that such is the inspiring influence of a republican atmosphere, that *our citizens are born* with the requisite qualifications for self-government;—that *their* knowledge is instinctive; and that Locke, and others of the metaphysical fraternity, were in error, at least so far as relates to us, about the nonexistence of innate ideas!

I beg particular attention to this reasoning. It seems to me to be sound ; and if so, there can be but one opinion about its importance. A greater delusion cannot be adduced than that by which our nation seems to be spell-bound on this subject. We maintain one moment in controversy with the monarchist, that with the aid of virtue and intelligence our government is feasible ; and yet the very next we dispirit the philanthropist and practical patriot, in their liberal efforts for popular improvement, by contending that the education of the people is impracticable !

But all such objections and misgivings as those I have been combatting, are not only without foundation, but are out of place and useless, with reference to the popular mind in the United States. Fortunately for the human race, we are placed in circumstances under which we have no option as to our conduct in regard to education ; experience is demonstrating, what correct views of human nature should have long since led us to anticipate, that the low attainments, intellectual and moral, with which we have been hitherto contented, and which so many deem unavoidable, are not sufficient for our political necessities : unless it be in the power of education, therefore, to do vastly more for us than it has done, — if the past afford a just measure of the future, — then our case is hopeless.

It is quite too late for us *to discuss* the question

of the practicability of appropriate popular education. The original framers of all our constitutions have assumed it ; and acting upon this assumption we have removed the few restraints upon the elective franchise which they deemed it prudent to leave. Our hearty undivided efforts therefore should be given to spreading far and wide those means of intellectual and moral culture which our democratic ardour has made essential. The time for entertaining doubts of the possibility of the *liberal* education of *all* the people was before our revolutionary struggle, before we had precipitated ourselves into a situation which makes this impossibility essential. The vessel is fairly out at sea ; a storm is gathering ; breakers are ahead ; it is impossible to put about, for the people are at the helm and in command, and will go forward ; and if, while under way, we cannot manage to inspire them with caution and to teach them the art of political navigation, then the best that can be said of our prospects is that *we must take our chance.*

If this *be* impracticable, if the great mass of the people *are* insusceptible of a comparatively liberal education, and yet if this be necessary for our social welfare under the political institutions bequeathed us by our ancestors, then it was unwise as it was unkind in the fathers of the revolution to break up a state of society with which popular ignorance was not incompatible, and to

throw their children into a condition in which the means of their security and happiness are beyond their reach. If, I repeat, the liberal education of all the people be from the present structure of society indispensable, and at the same time unattainable, better would it have been that we had remained the subjects of monarchical power; for better, far better, is it to have government in any form, even the most arbitrary and despotic, than to be exposed to the lawless anarchy and misrule which must ensue upon an emancipation of the popular will; without appropriate enlightenment of the popular mind.

Before I close this section I must not fail to reiterate that I by no means deem it essential to the theory sketched in the preceding chapter, that the improvements which it suggests be instantaneously made. I regard this as the work of time, of successive generations. I do not expect educational and consequently national perfection to be reached by a bound. All experience admonishes us that the human mind does not go by bounds. I merely contend, as I shall not cease to do while God allows me breath to speak or strength to move a pen, for the practicability of improvement, *vast improvement, time and favouring circumstances being allowed*. I alledge most solemnly the belief that this is within our power, provided we shall use the means which God in his providence has placed at our disposal. Here is the source of diffi-

culty, here is the obstruction, here the point of failure. We do not exert ourselves as we ought and as we might, for its achievement. I know it is impracticable without exertion, and I complain of that skepticism the absurdity of which I would expose, that it is one of the principal causes of that excessive torpor upon this subject which is so prevalent. I admit the necessity of caution, moderation, prudence. But these are virtues we can bring in play only while we are *acting*, not when we are sitting still.

I admit there is a species of hope which is extravagant and injudicious, which enthusiastically calculates on splendid results without the use of adequate means. Such a hope, I grant, it is impolitic to cherish. It can be the interest of none to deceive or impose upon themselves. The short-lived pleasure, arising from the temporary indulgence of unfounded expectations, is but a poor remuneration for the bitterness and mortification of final disappointment. But then there is also a timidity which is fatal to every thing like enterprise, and there is a paralyzing skepticism which is either based on uninformed indifference or else affected as an apology for parsimony and inaction. There is no greater obstacle to the establishment of a system of national education, of *American* education, than this deep-rooted and wide-spread skepticism, as to its practicability. It is true in other things as well as in religion,

that unbelief may make impossible what but for it is only difficult. This though, thank God, is a hinderance of our own creating; and as it is based upon erroneous reasoning and views, it is therefore superable, and there is abundant encouragement to attack it.

One of the most alarming signs in our political horizon is the despondency which has pervaded the minds of some of our best and greatest men, as to our national prospects. Those who indulge this weakness cannot have reflected upon the contagious influence of their example. They ought to remember that despondency in them tends to produce despair in ordinary minds. Such a feeling, therefore, should not be tolerated by them for a moment. Beside, such apprehensions I most fondly believe to be unfounded, at all events premature. Those who entertain them cannot have reflected on the regenerating, saving power of education. They misjudge the capabilities of our nature, they degrade its prospects, they rate too low its susceptibilities, and anticipate too little from the application of means whose influence has scarcely yet been tried: above all, they are wanting in faith in that wise and overruling Providence who has thus far so signally guided and protected our nation.

No—let us “*never despair of the Republic!*” With this as our motto let us awake from our lethargy; let us banish our forebodings and lend our



undivided energies to improve and multiply the means of education in which, under God it is universally acknowledged, if there be safety anywhere, safety only can be found. I admit that there is danger, but let us be up and doing to avert it. I know it is within the limits of possibility that the great moral experiment we have been entrusted with trying, may ultimately prove a failure. Yet if this be ordained, let us see that it be not permitted to fail without a becoming struggle in its favour. I grant it is not impossible, that the noble vessel launched by our fathers, and on which have been embarked the hopes of our own and of other nations, of this and of future generations, may ultimately be engulfed and perish ; but let us, one and all, resolve that if this is to be her fate, that if she must go down, she shall sink with sails all spread, and colours flying, betokening to the world it was not *our* fault ; that *to the last* we were to be found at our post *doing our duty* !

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## SECTION II.

HAVING given in the preceding section my reasons for believing in the practicability of such a system of national education as is dictated by the philosophy of human nature and the social and political relations of Americans, I proceed in this to offer some

suggestions as to the legislative steps which should be taken to put this system into operation. In stating these, I shall take them up in the natural order of succession.

The first thing then to be determined by a legislature or a parent when providing for the education of children, is to say what that education shall be.

It is not a little singular that this has been omitted in all the legislative efforts made for the spread of common school education in this country. It has been left for neighbourhoods and teachers to decide, not only as to the books which should be employed, (this is well enough,) but as to the studies which should be pursued, and the intellectual and moral habits which should be formed. Now it is clear that in this way a diversity of tastes would be consulted, which must produce a diversity in the results altogether inconsistent with that *general* uniformity which is one of the most obvious features in what may properly be called national education. A nation is a large family ; and as all the members of this family are to spend their lives under very similar circumstances, and under the same institutions, it is manifest that their *elementary* education should be pretty much the same ; and that its character and degree should have a primary reference to the nature of these circumstances and these institutions. But these ends can never be attained if the choice of the plan

of education be left to children or their parents, or their teachers. The legislature therefore should *prescribe* it.

In expressing an opinion as to the nature of *American* education, I of course should say, in accordance with the views advanced in the second and third chapters of this work, that it ought to be made emphatically religious, strictly philosophical, and far more extensive in its range of studies than it is at present.

In the first place, it should be emphatically religious.

If this be conceded, and legislatures be ready to act upon it, and the people willing they shall do so, the mode of effecting it is both plain and easy. All that is requisite in this case is, that *the study of the Bible, with a view to teaching it, shall form a part of the professional education of instructors* in the seminaries erected for this purpose; and that they shall be authorized, if not directed, to take it with them into the schools where they shall teach, and to use it *daily* for all the purposes of the moral and religious culture of the children committed to their care.

I embrace this opportunity to guard against the possibility of unintentional misconception as to what I mean by *religious education*.

I shall state, in the first place, what I do *not* mean, and in the next what I *do* mean by this expression.

I say then at once, and with emphatic distinctness, that by religious education I do not mean sectarian nor (according to the general acceptance of the word) even doctrinal instruction. It is quite enough that the minds of individuals should be perplexed by the consideration of controverted theological dogmas, when they shall have arrived at years of maturity ; and, therefore, to spare the mind of simple hearted childhood this distracting and too often exasperating task, is but the moderate demand of ordinary charity. "Technical divinity," even in its unexceptionable forms, is a study for ripened understandings ; and to harass the minds of children with doctrines which they cannot understand, — to involve them, if they are connected with families belonging to different persuasions, in angry and interminable discussions, at a place and time when all should be peaceful and harmonious association ; — in short, to convert the school-room into a theological hall, and to pervert education into a grand instrument for making proselytes, would be cruel and dishonest in the extreme.

If, as is reasonable, parents desire to have their children informed as to the peculiarities of their own faith, nothing is easier nor more simple than to throw this task upon the Sunday-school, where none but children of the same persuasion are assembled, or (as is done in Prussia, so as to avoid every difficulty,) to reserve it for their respective

spiritual teachers ; but never let the shadow of sectarian influence be engrafted upon the exercises of the ordinary school : on this point I would be as strenuous as any one.

There are many, however, who are afraid that the most prudent and impartial attempt to introduce religious instruction into schools would unavoidably have a proselyting tendency ; but all such apprehensions are based upon an assumption which is utterly without foundation. It is a most unfortunate impression which has obtained general currency in our country, involving even Christians in practical indifference where all should be stirring and conscientious activity, that it is impracticable for us, divided as we are into so many sects, to make religious culture an object of attention in our schools without interfering with peculiarities of faith.

The question was sometimes asked myself, if I did not find it hard to keep my promise of neutrality in this respect while conducting the morning exercises with my pupils, alluded to in the third section of the second chapter ? In answer to this, it always gave me pleasure to express, as it does here to record, my sincere conviction that to encounter any difficulty from this cause in an honest effort to inculcate Scriptural truth *for practical purposes*, it must be wilfully sought after. I never experienced the shadow of embarrassment on this account, nor do I believe it necessary that

it be experienced by any one in any case whatever. There is abundance in the Bible which is matter of common faith with all denominations, the communication of which may employ all the time of the most assiduous teacher. When the copious history and biography of the sacred volume, its innumerable precepts forming the best code and the only perfect code of morals in the world, its exceeding great and precious promises scattered on every page, and inspiring motives and ability to those who will appropriate them to "become partakers of the Divine nature;" when these, I say, shall have been exhausted, then, and not till then, can it be fairly objected to the employment of the Bible as an instrument of moral influence, that we cannot so use it, without subjecting the minds of children to the study of metaphysical subtleties, and disturbing the peace of society by embroiling the young in the unfortunate religious differences that divide their parents. It is truly cheering to reflect, that for every verse of the inspired record about whose meaning denominations differ, there are at least a thousand in which they perfectly agree; so that upon the doctrine of chances, to say nothing of the safeguard afforded by principle and common honesty in teachers, there is but little danger to be apprehended.

To admit, as has been generally done at least in act by Christians throughout the Union, that the Bible cannot be employed in education with-

out exerting a sectarian influence is virtually to consent to the banishment of religion altogether from our schools. And such is the singular and inconsistent state of things in this Christian land at present. To appropriate the language of Dr. Rush upon the subject, there never was devised a more ingenious stratagem than "this new mode of attacking Christianity." Even allowing it to be true that the only alternative for *the banishment* of religion were a resort to the most flagrant sectarian influence, still we should not hesitate for a moment which extreme to choose, for any religion whatever, even if it be that of Mahomet or Confucius, is to be preferred to practical Atheism.

So far from wishing to see our "common schools" converted into proselyting engines, and from believing that religious and sectarian instruction are inseparable, I am inclined to the impression that the only way to prevent the education of the country from becoming sectarian, is for the *government* to make it *religious*. Religious it must be made in some way or other; and if our legislatures do not bring it about, the pious portion of our citizens will do it for themselves. That the moral faculties should be cultivated as well as the intellectual, and that the Bible should be made to lend the strengthening sanctions and the guidance of its religion to the popular morality, are propositions which, in a Christian community, should not be regarded as open for dis-

cussion. They should be looked upon as matters of conscience which do not admit of deliberation. As such, they are attracting the notice of Christians of every name. And all who think and examine seriously, come to one and the same conclusion on the subject.

So soon as this impression shall have become sufficiently general to induce concert in its application, (and it behooves the legislators of our country to mark the rapid progress it is making,) a new and delicate question will arise, as to who shall be the teachers in these schools, and what the nature of the religious instruction communicated in them? This question, it could hardly be expected the various denominations would be able to settle to the satisfaction of all upon any amalgamating plan, and of course there would be danger lest sectarian jealousy should demand for the children of each denomination, teachers of the same shade of faith, and thus the country become as much divided in regard to the support of education, as it is about the maintenance of religion.

The effects of such disunion in the United States would be disastrous in the extreme, far worse with us than in France, or Prussia, or any other European nation. The Prussian public school system is said to experience little or no embarrassment from differences in religious faith among the people. An adequate reason for this readily suggests itself without the necessity of supposing



that there exists in that country greater indifference about peculiarities in religion than here. In Prussia there are but two sects, the Protestant and Roman Catholic. In the United States there are dozens. In Prussia, the Roman Catholics and Protestants are for the most part settled in separate provinces, which, according to the preponderance of one or the other class, admit of being designated in the Geographies as Catholic or Protestant provinces. It is a very easy thing, therefore, under such circumstances, to introduce religious instruction into the schools without encountering difficulties from sectarian prejudice. All that is requisite is (what would naturally occur,) to employ Catholic teachers in a Catholic province, or neighbourhood, and the reverse in Protestant settlements.

But in the United States, Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, &c. are scattered promiscuously over the face of the country; the same neighbourhood commonly containing families that belong to different religious bodies. If by any cause, therefore, such a state of things be brought about that the Baptist must have a Baptist schoolmaster for his children; others a Methodist for theirs; and others, still within the same vicinity, a Presbyterian for theirs, the inevitable consequence must be, that owing to this manifold division of the strength of the neighbourhood, it

will either have no school at all, or else several of a very inferior character.

The costliness of such an arrangement which would impose upon the same neighbourhood the burden of erecting and furnishing several school-houses, and of maintaining several teachers, when one of each would be sufficient for the whole, is of itself a sufficient objection against it. When we consider, too, the sparseness of the population in most parts of the Union, particularly in the newer states, where attention to education is most desirable because most likely to be neglected, and when we reflect how very partially education is diffused at present, in the absence of so formidable a hinderance as that of which we speak, it surely must be admitted that the obstacles to its dissemination are abundantly numerous and great without adding others to the list.

But the most distressing of all consequences, one by the side of which all others dwindle into shadows, would be the infusion of religious party spirit into the bosoms of the youth and children of our country. The harmony of society is disturbed enough at present ; its texture is sufficiently rent and torn by differences of religious opinion as they prevail among adults. But these evils, already great, would be increased a thousand fold and carried beyond endurance, if our offspring were to be made parties in sectarian strife, if our children taking sides in infancy, were to

grow up to manhood with the confirmed habits of religious partizans. At present, the peace of the school-room, and the hilarity of the playground are interrupted but little by diversities of religious or political opinion existing among parents. God grant the day may never arrive when the question shall be frequently and seriously entertained, whether it is not better to have no schools at all, than to have them at the expense of domestic and neighbourhood tranquillity. But such a day may come, (indeed an attentive observer may already discern its dawn,) unless our *legislatures* will consent to introduce religious instruction into the public schools *in a manner and measure acceptable to all*.

That this can be done I entertain a cheering confidence. If there are formidable difficulties in the way, they are not intrinsic but relate entirely to popular prejudice which I would hope, by proper exertions on the part of those who have the control of public opinion, may be set right. I am fully persuaded from experience that those teachers who are disposed to do so, will find it perfectly easy to avoid all proselyting efforts, whilst I also believe that a system of checks and safeguards may be adopted which must render the exposure of those who might attempt to take undue advantages of the trust reposed in them both certain and speedy.

To accomplish this all that would be necessary

is that the course of instruction *be prescribed by the State*, the parts of the Bible to be taught being marked out, and *the particular lesson for each day of the year being designated*, (all of which is perfectly easy;) that the candidates be made familiar with this course whilst learning their profession; and that this exercise of the school *be an open one*, having a stated hour assigned it, *when all the neighbourhood shall have a standing invitation to attend*. With such an arrangement the detection of unfaithfulness must be next to unavoidable, and the easy and obvious remedy would be that complaint be lodged with the Board of Trustees or other controllers of the school. Only let a situation be made desirable by the offer of liberal pay, (as should always be the case,) and any teacher whom moral principle might not keep straight, will be found to love his purse full as well as he loves his sect, and therefore will do his duty from motives of policy if not for conscience sake.

I cannot entertain a doubt that our legislatures will in time be required by the urgency of our political condition, to take the ground which is here suggested. Indeed, there is animating reason to believe that they will be sustained in doing so, at a much earlier period than the friends of religion could have ventured to anticipate. The bold and noble stand taken by the legislature of New-York in January last, (1838,) has revived the hopes and infused fresh courage into the minds of those who

believe that the safety and welfare of our country are essentially dependent on the prevalence of a *religious* morality and a *moral* religion.

When it is borne in mind that the representatives of this great State at one and the same session doubled the amount of the public money for the purpose of improving the education given in the common schools, making it four hundred thousand dollars instead of two hundred thousand ! and in reply to the petition of sundry persons praying that all religious exercises and the use of the Bible might be prohibited in the public schools, decided by a vote of a hundred and twenty one to one, that the request of the petitioners be not granted !! we are encouraged to hope that the union of intellectual and moral education, of religion and morality, of the Bible and the ordinary school-book,\* which is required by the necessities and interests of the State no less than of the Church, is soon to be illustrated in the public schools of that member of our confederacy, whose "system" is becoming increasingly an object of imitation in all the rest. The "Report" presented by the Hon. Daniel D. Barnard on the occasion referred to, is one which does honour to the heart and head of him who penned it; and its triumphant adoption will signalize the session at

\* It must not be inferred from this expression that I am in favour of having the Bible used as a mere school or reading-book : I have already expressed an opinion to the contrary.

which it was presented as the commencement of a new era in the moral history of our country.

I cannot refrain from copying a portion of this report for the purpose of corroborating the doctrines of this volume by the noble, unequivocal and almost unanimous testimony of the representatives of the most powerful member of our political union. The report closes in the following manner :—

“Moral instruction is quite as important to the object had in view in popular education, as intellectual instruction ; it is indispensable to that object. But to make such instruction effective, it should be given according to the best code of morals known to the country and the age ; and that code it is universally conceded, is contained in the Bible. Hence the Bible, as containing that code, so far from being arbitrarily excluded from our schools, ought to be in common use in them.

“Keeping all the while in view the object of popular education, — the necessity of fitting the people by moral as well as intellectual discipline for self-government, — no one can doubt that any system of instruction which overlooks the training and informing of the moral faculties must be wretchedly and fatally defective. Crime and intellectual cultivation merely, so far from being dissociated in history and statistics, are unhappily old acquaintances and tried friends. To neglect the moral powers in education, is to educate not quite half

the man. To cultivate the intellect only, is to unhinge the mind and destroy the essential balance of the mental powers; it is to light up a recess only the better to show how dark it is. And if this is all that is done in popular education, then nothing, literally nothing, is done towards creating and establishing public virtue, and forming a moral people.

“The moral powers then must be informed and cultivated in our schools. Children must be instructed in moral truth and be taught to feel habitually the force of moral obligation; and to do this according to the best standard, the use of the Bible for that purpose cannot be dispensed with. So it is believed that the great majority of our people think; and wherever they think so in the towns, they will of course by their proper officers, order and direct the course of instruction accordingly.

“Nor is it discovered what good right the petitioners, or any minority of persons, have to object to the use of this book for the purpose indicated, as an approved and standard work for instruction in morals, because their opinion of its merits in this respect may differ from that of the majority. If the minority may rule in regard to the use of this book and forbid the teaching of its code, they may do the same thing in regard to any other book, or any other subject. They may insist that the Christian code of morals shall be exchanged

for that of the Brahmins, or turn the schools over to Plato or Aristotle, or Seneca, or Mahomet. They may prescribe the entire course of studies, instead of leaving it to be done by those to whom the law and the voice of the majority have confided the power.

“Nor again, is it discovered that the practice of teaching morals according to the Christian code, and using the Bible for that purpose, the majority adopting it, is any infringement whatever on the religious rights and liberty of any individual. To teach Christian morals, referring to the Bible both for the principles and for their illustrations, is a widely different thing from teaching what is understood to be a Christian religion. Religion is a matter between a man and his God. It has reference to the worship of the Supreme Being, and the mode of such worship; and has relation to a future state of existence, and the retributions of that future state; and it is concerned with creeds and articles of faith. Now, religious freedom consists in a man’s professing and enjoying what religious faith he pleases, or in the right of rejecting all religions; and this freedom is in no degree invaded when the morals of the Bible are taught in public schools.

“And if the Christian religion, as a system of faith, whether according to one creed or another creed, according to the notions of one sect, or of another sect, is not taught in these schools, then



of course there can be no pretence that this religion is in this way supported by the State. Your committee in common, they believe, with nearly the whole body of their fellow-citizens, would regard it as the deepest of calamities, if religion,—the Christian religion,—should fall under the protection and patronage of political power. That religion is in its nature free ; it cannot take support from law without losing its lustre and its purity ; it is in its very essence and spirit to demand none but a voluntary worship, and allow none but a voluntary support. But we cannot discern that it is in the least danger of injury from any public support in the schools on account of the use which may be made there of the Bible as a text or a class-book.

“ Your committee have now given the reason why they think the Christian code of morals should be taught in our schools as an indispensable part of our system of popular instruction ; and why the Bible should be employed for that purpose. There are other reasons why it is exceedingly desirable and important that this book should be generally used in our schools and seminaries, instead of being arbitrarily excluded as these petitioners require. But we do not deem it necessary to detail those reasons. If the Bible should be studied for its moral principles, it should be studied also as a history and as a classic. As an authentic narrative of events, the most extraordinary and the most interesting any where recorded

of our race, it is invaluable ; and there is nothing, and can be nothing, to supply its place.

“And such is the nature and antiquity of its story, that no education in this department of knowledge, not the most elementary, can be had without some acquaintance with its contents. And then as a classic, if generally employed as such, it would certainly supply a want which no other book can. The faithful and critical study of the English language, in its purity, by the youth of our country, is immensely important ; and it is confidently believed, that no where can there be found in the same compass, half as many specimens of beautiful and pure Anglo-Saxon language, as in the Bible. And we think it may be safely said that, since the publication of the present English Bible, as translated under the orders of King James, no writer or speaker in that language can be named, who has acquired any just celebrity for the simplicity, strength, and beauty of his diction, who has not been mainly indebted to that book for his excellence in that particular. Mr. Fox declared, that if he was ever eloquent, it was because he had faithfully studied the book of Job.

“In conclusion, your committee would only say that, while after the most attentive examination, they have not been able to find, in the memorial before them, one fair ground of complaint, they have been, and are, deeply impressed with

many and weighty considerations which urge on all who value the interests of education, the interests of morals, and the interests of the country and of mankind, the indispensable necessity of preserving to the people the right to employ the Bible as a means of invaluable secular instruction, in all the public schools and seminaries, to which they may have occasion to resort.

“Complaints of whatever is valuable in civil society will always be made. Some who make them are honest, but mistaken; more act under the merest delusion; a few are speculative and reckless. Men of this latter class are apt to be ingenious, because restless and dissatisfied. Their work is to destroy, but never build. The moral restraints of society sit gallingly upon them. They take the name of liberty on their lips, but they mean license and confusion. With them nothing is sacred, nothing is venerable, and nothing is safe. And of late their boldness and strength seem to have increased. Their spirit is seen every where. It is busy with political institutions, with religious obligations, with social forms and domestic ties; busy to weaken, to invalidate, and to undermine.

“They are not supposed to be numerous even yet; but they have followers, who are followers because they do not know who they are who lead them, or whither they are led. This state of things demands undoubtedly great firmness on

the part of those who would sustain and preserve what is valuable in our social and political forms. And it demands as much moderation as firmness. We would always hear ; we would always consider ; and we would always reply only by argument and by appeals to reason and to truth. It is in this way that the committee have intended to meet the complaints of these memorialists ; and with what success they have done so, must now be left to the judgement of the house and of the country.

“The committee recommend to the house the adoption of the following resolution :

“*Resolved*, That the prayer of the memorialists be not granted.”

Having thus expressed my views as to what I do *not* mean by “religious education,” I shall in a very few words state the meaning which I do attach to this expression.

By “religious education,” then, I mean the cultivation of the moral part of our nature, the regulation of the will and the affections, of the sentiments and conduct, in a word, the formation of the character by the rules laid down, and the motives presented in the inspired volume. Infinite wisdom, and I may add, Divine authority, has given the Bible for this purpose, to be used by adults for themselves, but by parents for their children, as is clearly intimated by the only direction given in its pages respecting the education of children,

which requires parents to "train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," and by the only command expressly addressed to children which bids them "honour their father and mother," and "obey their parents."

In the view of God, the whole of moral education is provided for *by enjoining it on parents to form the character of their children upon the very same principles by which they are required to regulate their own conduct.* The parent in directing is not to be guided *by his own will, nor by the opinions of the world,* but is to "speak as the oracles of God;" and the child in complying is to be determined by the consideration that God has bidden him, and is thus to be brought at the outset of his immortal career under the influence and guidance of the very same motives and the same precepts by which he is to regulate his opinions and his conduct in after life, and in the eternal world.

Let the task of the parent, as here stated, be performed *in every common school, with every child, by every teacher,* (as the temporary substitute, or rather auxiliary of the parent,) and we shall have a state of things which will come up perfectly to the idea I wish to convey respecting the theory of the moral education which our political circumstances require, and which should be *aimed at* by our national system, however far it may have to fall short in the execution. There is not a moral

duty, personal, social, or political, which is not clearly pointed out either by a specific precept or by a general principle in the Bible ; and there are no motives on which it will be safe to rely for the regulation of the conduct of society, but those which influenced the actions of our perfect exemplar and which he comprehensively expresses when he says, "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." The moment we leave this ground, we get into the obscure, uncertain, devious wake of expediency, which has given birth to a system of morals the best of whose fruits is likely to be that it may overthrow itself ; for I very much mistake the signs of the times if we are not about to discover that it is exceedingly *inexpedient* to make *expediency* the basis of our system of national morals.

But I will not enter again upon a statement of *my reasons* for these views. These have been expressed substantially in the third chapter of this volume.

Nor am I prepared to *specify* the exact methods in which it is best to employ the Bible in our schools for the purposes of moral culture. A work that shall do this judiciously is, I repeat, one of the greatest desiderata in practical education.

I shall conclude this section by remarking *with respect to the improvement of intellectual education*, which is one of the objects that every government should keep in view when arranging a system of

public instruction, that it can be effected only by the *proper professional* education of teachers. Let teachers once be got to understand their business properly and education in all respects will be soon enough improved. *Good workmen, with fair opportunities*, seldom fail to produce good work.

### SECTION III.

THE nature, that is, the general features and the spirit of the education which may subserve our national purposes being determined by government, a suitable theory having been adopted, the next thing is to provide for its execution; this leads me to remark that the first step which should be taken towards putting in operation a system of national education in the United States, is for our legislatures, each for its own state, and Congress for the District of Columbia and the several territories, to appoint at once Superintendents of public instruction.

The only way in which the establishment of a system of national education in this country can be brought about, is by the co-operation of legislative effort and public sentiment, acting and reacting on each other. Hence the government should aim not only to keep up with public opinion, but to go a little ahead of it. The general and

enthusiastic approbation with which the stand taken by the New-York legislature, in relation to the use of the Bible in schools as well as in regard to the increase of the appropriation from the public funds for the benefit of common schools, has been received, demonstrates, that when the people have once become deeply interested, a legislature may advance as fast as can be desirable toward perfecting its system of popular instruction.

It being true, then, that one of the ends of legislation should be to exert a favourable influence on the public mind, there is no measure better calculated to have this effect (at the same time that it is requisite for the judicious and energetic execution of any plans which may be adopted) than the appointment of Superintendents. These in all cases should be first rate men, whose pay should be in proportion to their worth, and such as would justify them in devoting *their undivided attention to their official duties*.

Government has scarcely a more important office in its gift; and he who fills it properly will find it impossible for him to do much else. The duties of a Superintendent are by no means limited to making out reports. This is the smallest and easiest part of his task. He should become a devoted student of the whole subject of education, that he may understand its nature and the best methods of accomplishing it. If he be ignorant of these, how can he offer intelligent suggestions to the



legislature, or aid teachers in improving the process of instruction? He must also feel himself charged with the duty of preparing the public to permit a system of popular education to be adopted where none exists, and to welcome improvements where one is already established. Could no other ends than these be gained by the appointment of Superintendents they are more than sufficient to justify the requisite expense. Only let a *suitable* Secretary of Education be appointed at once by each of the states and territories of the Union, and I see nothing to prevent the commencement of a system of national education throughout the country in two or three years.

I take the liberty of suggesting a mode of procedure, which, if heartily adopted, would relieve this expectation from all appearance of extravagance. I would have a proposition made this winter, by some one of our legislatures to all the rest, and to the general government, that a Superintendent of Popular Education be forthwith appointed in every state and territory; that a National Convention be held in New-York, in the month of May next, immediately after the anniversaries of the various benevolent societies; that a copious list of subjects for consideration at this Convention be circulated throughout the Union; that the Superintendent of education in each state be *instructed* to attend; and that from five to ten (I mention so large a number that the attendance

of one or more may be certain,) respectable citizens be *requested*, by nomination, to be present to aid him; that a general *invitation* be given to all friends of education, whether in or out of the United States, to attend and especially to go *prepared* to give their views on some of the topics embraced in the circular above alluded to; that the Superintendents be *authorized* to employ stenographers to record the proceedings of the Convention; that the Superintendents be *directed* to remain, after the adjournment of the Convention, *a sufficient length of time to enable them to arrive at definite ideas as to the best method of procedure in their respective states*; that each be required to draw up a report to the legislature which he represents; and that these reports, together with so much of the proceedings of the Convention as the Superintendents may think proper, shall be published at the joint expense of all the legislatures represented.

I cannot conceive of any measure or measures, so well calculated at once to excite and to enlighten the public mind on this most important of all earthly topics; and how could our legislatures become so well prepared to digest a system of education accommodated to their respective wants as by thus availing themselves of the united wisdom and experience of the entire Union; and I may add, too, without extravagance, of the civilized world? for if our shores are annually visited by

European philanthropists, who come of their own accord or are sent to study our institutions, might we not expect that at such a convention for such purposes, (purposes of common interest to the entire family of man,) and when invited in the name of our thirty Republics, some at least would attend and bring with them the rich stores of information they possess in regard to education?

At such a convention as that proposed, the great principles which should regulate the structure and management of common school systems everywhere, might be ascertained and settled; each portion of the Union might become accurately acquainted with the condition of things in every other; local difficulties might be stated and removed; *the great danger of too strict imitation might be guarded against*; information might be gathered, or useful hints elicited as to the best method of raising and distributing money, as to the education of teachers, the formation of school districts, the structure of school-houses, the studies proper for common schools, the best text books, and in short, the entire principles and machinery of a system of public education.

By the adoption of a plan like this, the great evils and dangers of detached and isolated efforts might be avoided, and so much of uniformity be introduced into all our systems as would be prudent and attainable; in other words, a fair opportunity would be afforded of devising a sys-

tem which, with a wise and due regard to local peculiarities, would still be worthy of the dignified title of A SYSTEM OF AMERICAN EDUCATION.

Is inquiry made as to the expense attending such a convention? If we must resort to pecuniary arguments in this case, they will be found to be triumphantly in favour of the plan proposed. The expense need not exceed six or eight hundred dollars to any State or Territory, viz. two hundred dollars to defray the travelling expenses of the Superintendent, and the remainder to pay the printer and stenographer. Now when we recollect that to proceed intelligently in framing and managing a system of public education, each legislature must inform itself of what has been done by others, and that to gain a *very partial knowledge* of this by the mission of an agent, or by any other *isolated* effort, a considerable expenditure of money is necessary, and especially when we bear in mind the costliness of a single mistake that may arise from erroneous or imperfect information, we cannot avoid the conclusion that were the expense of giving to each State and Territory in the Union a full and accurate acquaintance with the *real* state of things in all the rest, and with the best plan for itself under its peculiar circumstances, five times, nay, a hundred times as great as I have supposed to be necessary, it would be economical as well as wise to incur it.

What a noble spectacle would be afforded by the representatives of sixteen millions of people deliberating in solemn convention about the intellectual and moral culture of every child within their territory without respect to its parentage or circumstances, and about the best method of employing the powerful agency of education to preserve and to perpetuate those precious institutions to which the eyes, and in no small degree the hopes, of the civilized world have been directed ! and when we reflect on the dependence of legislation upon the popular will, how vast and healthy must be the impulse which would thereby be given to the cause of popular instruction throughout our country ! By a judicious distribution of the copies of the proceedings of convention, the Superintendents would find it easy during their tours through their respective States to enlist the press, the pulpit, and "the stump," heartily and *intelligently*, in favour of their cause ; and with such auxiliaries it is impossible that success should not attend their efforts.

I know of no other plan than that suggested by which our governments can so effectually bring to their aid the great engine of public opinion ; and if the results of employing this expedient be not vastly overrated, it is clear that by resorting to it for two or three years in succession, a system of national education adapted to the United States

might not only be commenced, but in a good degree matured.

After determining the kind of education to be given, and appointing agents who shall prepare the people to receive it, the next step to be taken by a legislature is to provide teachers in sufficient numbers, who shall be qualified to educate the children of the country in the way desired by the government.

The best method of effecting this most desirable object, is a subject which we are just beginning to study in the United States. It is a question which requires the united wisdom of the nation to determine, and the settlement of which alone would be a sufficient reward for the expense incident to the holding a national convention on the plan proposed, were there not another argument in its favour.

What I have to say upon this subject I throw out merely in the way of suggestion, as it is one upon which I have not yet been able to come to a settled opinion.

The first thought that naturally arises in relation to the best method of preparing teachers is, that they should be formed or educated just as most other artists are educated, viz: by *practising under the direction of some experienced guide*. Why may not the plan of apprenticeship with a view to acquiring the art of teaching, be as effectual as it is with reference to any other business,

since all that is necessary to make a good teacher is, that he shall practise teaching under a good teacher?

A threefold answer must be given to this question. In the first place, the business of instruction is so poorly paid, that there is very little inducement for young men to go to the expense of studying it as a profession; and then there is no occasion for this, as any one who wishes to teach can readily obtain employment without the least experience or training; and, lastly, were both these difficulties out of the way, we have not good schools, in sufficient numbers, which would serve as nurseries for teachers. It would scarcely ever be convenient to have more than three or four apprentices in any one school; therefore the model schools needed on this principle, would be at least one third as numerous as the teachers we wished to form. It is necessary to throw out these ideas, since there are some who are opposed to establishing seminaries for educating teachers, because from analogy it seems unnecessary. Under existing circumstances, however, I fear there is but little prospect of obtaining any thing like a supply of qualified teachers in any other way.

Respecting the best mode of organizing a school for teachers, public opinion is unsettled. Some think a college the best place; and that, in addition to the usual professorships, the legislature should endow one for this purpose. But this proposition

almost always emanates from a wish to add to the consequence of a favourite institution, to which the department for teachers is chiefly intended to be an appendage and a prop. Besides, *a college* is not the place in which to learn to teach *a common school*; the subjects taught are not those which the candidate would have to teach, nor could he have those opportunities of *practising* which are indispensable.

Others are in favour of using the academies for this purpose. This is much the better plan of the two, but there are serious objections to it also. There is reason to fear lest in these, as in the colleges, the teachers' department would be an object of secondary consequence.

But that we may prosecute this discussion to greater advantage, let us inquire, for a moment, what are the requisites for a good professional school for teachers? We shall be at once directed to a correct answer to this question by considering another, viz: what is a teacher expected to do when he takes charge of a school? The whole of his task consists of three items: he has to impart knowledge to children; to prescribe for them such methods of practising as will form good habits, intellectual and moral; and he has to govern them. These three then, — *instruction, mental and moral practice, and discipline*, — are the duties for which he has to fit himself, and they furnish an infallible criterion by which to deter-



mine the essential features of the professional school in which he is to qualify himself for discharging them. It is clear that this must be so organized as to afford him an opportunity *to acquire* the knowledge he may have to communicate, and *to practise teaching and governing*, that he may be able to learn *the art* of doing so. These are the indispensable elements of a good school for teachers, and that institution is *essentially* faulty when either of these is wanting.

Being thus furnished with a test, let us apply it to academies. In regard to the first particular they may answer very well. They give such a knowledge as a common school teacher wants. Some of the branches, it is true, rise above what he may have occasion to teach, but so much the better, for every instructor ought to know a good deal more than he shall have to impart. In relation to the two last particulars, however, they are not so suitable. I doubt if the requisite opportunities of *practice*, both in teaching and governing, can be afforded *to a sufficient extent*, where the professional department is considered to be of subordinate importance to the academy proper. This, however, is being made a matter of experiment by those (I mean in New-York where eight academies are employed in this way,) who are qualified to judge, and whose recent spirit in behalf of education makes it certain, that if it shall

not be found to answer, they will find out something better.

Prof. J. O. Taylor, of New-York, has recently set in operation a plan which promises much good. He announced by advertisement in the spring, that if fifty young men would come forward, he would lecture to them for a given period, and at the end of the time find them situations in which they should have better pay than teachers usually receive. His class was immediately made up, and he has already made engagements for a number of them with schools whose supporters are willing to give them higher wages than they have been accustomed to give to others, *because of the probability that they will be better teachers.*

I would here take the liberty to ask, why may not this plan *in an expanded form* be put in operation in all our cities and larger towns? Why may not a faculty be formed, (after the plan of medical school faculties,) consisting of some three or four of the ablest teachers in a city, each of whom, beside lecturing to the candidates, shall take a portion of them daily into his school, and add a species of practical illustration similar to that afforded by the clinical lectures of the medical professor? In this way, twenty or more respectable Normal schools might be at once commenced in the United States; and such is the demand for teachers, there is no fear we shall have too many.

Upon this plan the essential requisites of a per-

fect school will be but imperfectly complied with, it is true ; but this perhaps must necessarily be the case with any other than that which is *the natural plan* of making teachers, viz. the serving an apprenticeship to the business under the direction of a skilful and experienced master. So soon as good schools shall have become sufficiently numerous, and *the prospects of better pay be held out to instructors*, we shall be at no loss for nurseries or for teachers either.

It is quite certain, however, that in any event, Normal schools of a *high order*, conducted by several professors of distinguished ability, will still be needed to meet the wants of those who shall desire to excel in their profession. And why may not such an institution or institutions be at once established by every state in the Union ? It should never be forgotten, that *to improve* education, is just now an object of greater moment in the United States than to spread it ; and there is no expedient so likely to effect this, as the creation of schools, the possession of whose diploma would be at once a matter of pride, an indication of real merit, and a passport to immediate and profitable employment. Only let *such* schools be founded, and the experience of the medical profession justifies the expectation that a large proportion of those who are now engaged in the business of teaching, would be anxious, or be constrained (in order to maintain their ground,) to

attend them for the purpose of professional improvement.

Before I leave this subject, I will suggest one other plan of a seminary for teachers, which may perhaps be adapted to the present state of things in our country. So long as the business of teaching continues to be in so low a condition, both as to respectability and pay as it is at present, it cannot be expected that any other than poor young men will desire to fit themselves for it. Hence, any plan provided for their education must have a due regard to economy, and if possible, afford in some shape, pecuniary aid to candidates.

To effect this object along with the essential ends of a school for teachers, I would have the seminary located in the country, where land is cheap, and where the agricultural labour of the students might help to lighten the expense of their board. They, of course, would be capable of productive manual exertion. I have been told by the most experienced farmers, that twelve or fifteen young men working day about in sets, could easily provide the *bread and meat* necessary for one hundred. The consumption of time upon this plan would not be more to each than one day in the week, which is usually lost by giving Saturday as a day of recreation. Let an able Professor be employed, and let the number of pupils admitted at first not exceed twenty or twenty-five.

Let the whole of their time the first year, or the first six months, be spent in studying, their teacher employing himself exclusively in giving them instruction. At the commencement of the next term, let another set be admitted, who, like the former, shall spend the time of their novitiate entirely in learning, *their instruction to be conducted chiefly by the class preceding them*, under the immediate professional guidance of the Superintendent, whose time would be employed the second and subsequent years, partly in giving fresh instruction to the upper classes, and partly in directing those who would be practising with a view to learning how to teach.

In this way the professional training of any number whatever might be economically provided for. Two Superintendents, with the assistance of the upper classes, every member of which would be an usher, could do much more than conduct the education of a hundred candidates.

The expense attending the establishment of such a seminary need not be very great. It would require, perhaps, a hundred acres of farming land; a supply of implements of husbandry; a sufficient number of cows and horses, and plain buildings, — such, for the most part, as the students would be able to erect; the whole costing, say from ten to twenty thousand dollars. The support of such a seminary would, after two or three years, cost the State little or nothing, since it would be per-

fectly reasonable to exact of the graduates a moderate yearly return, for as many years after they have been engaged in teaching as they spent at the seminary, and which, from a hundred individuals, would be amply sufficient to defray all current expenses.

The trial of this plan, I grant, would be an experiment ; but such, it seems to me, all plans for the education of teachers must, of necessity, be for some time to come. The interests of education, however, imperatively demand that something be done, and done quickly, to effect this most important object.

But it may be said it will be of no use to educate teachers unless there can be a security that they will follow the business of teaching after they are educated. This I admit ; and the only security society can have on this score, is that which will be furnished by the offer of better pay than is usually allowed. It is equally the dictate of wisdom and economy, that the pay of teachers be so liberal that *they shall not have any inducement to change their employment* ; and this suggests another practical question which relates to the next step, in the natural order that a legislature should take for the purpose of establishing a system of public instruction, viz : *how shall the requisite funds be raised ?*

I have already expressed my views at large upon this point, the substance of which amounts

to this, that the means of education ought not (if they could) to be obtained from a fund alone; that they cannot be obtained from taxation alone, and therefore both these plans should be united precisely as is done in the State of New-York, to the income from which may be added when necessary, the proceeds of a *very moderate* tuition fee, exacted *indiscriminately* of all the children attending school. It is a proposition of immense importance to the interests of education, that its support should be thrown to a much greater extent upon the property of the country in the way of an *ad-valorem* levy, and thereby leave less to be derived from individual contribution; at the same time that the income be sufficient to make the public schools decidedly good by the employment of able teachers at liberal wages.

The next and the last thing to be done by a legislature in order to put in operation a system of public education, is to induce all parents to send their children *to the public schools*. Some of the most important objects of national education must fail of accomplishment, if, after having determined the kind of education to be given, appointed Superintendents, provided able teachers, and obtained the means of paying them, a large propor-

tion of the children of the nation should still repair to private schools. How can this be prevented?

To secure the attendance of all the children of the country on the public schools, there are three classes of parents that must be conciliated or operated upon: the indifferent, the rich, and the religious.

To induce those parents who are indifferent about the education of their children, to send them to school, a very certain plan will be to tax their property, if they have any, and to bestow the benefit of the tax on others if they will not permit their children to enjoy it. If they be poor, the only way in which *the legislature* can reach them, is, (by the improvement of education,) to make ignorance so disgraceful that public sentiment operating on their pride will constrain them to employ that industry, and practise that economy, which alone are requisite to enable the poorest in this country to pay so small a tuition fee as ought to be exacted from each pupil.

To prevail upon the rich, or those whose estimate of the worth of education is very high, to send *their* children to the public schools, there is but one possible plan that can or ought to succeed, and that is, *to make the public schools so good that they can have no reason to send them elsewhere.*

To make the public schools acceptable to the more refined and aspiring part of the community, and thereby prevent the drain which is constantly



going on from the public to the private schools, the standard of education in the former must be greatly raised. Let the intellectual character of these schools be so much elevated that they may not be easily overshadowed and eclipsed by those of a select description, and others will soon cease to have existence. The public schools, like the public works and highways, should be of the very best kind. If government have a right to take the people's money at all for the support of schools, it surely has the right, and it is its duty, to give them good ones. If the government cannot manage an important interest better than the people can themselves, why take it out of their hands? What do the people gain by paying taxes for the maintenance of schools, which, when established, are often so indifferent, that the better part of society will not allow their children to frequent them?

No matter what the pretext under which government assumes the control of education, the obligation is imperative, that she make it good. Is it to produce in the youth of the country a uniformity of character, adapted to our social institutions? Desirable as this object is, it may be purchased at too dear a price; and we are inclined to think it is so if it be achieved by making education *uniformly bad*. Is it, that like an impartial parent, showing no dislikes to some, nor favouritism to others, she may assemble all her children on the

same foundation, regardless of distinctions which prevail at home ; thus cherishing, in early life, the republican feeling of equality ? Then she fails of her object most egregiously, when she drives the children of what aristocracy we have, to themselves ; and this she certainly does by making her public literary institutions so indifferent that none but the poor or the grovelling will accept their benefits. Is it that she may secure the blessing of education to all, even to those from whom the penury or selfishness of parents would withhold it ? Then should she act more like a genuine benefactor than to confer donations of questionable value, and which, to those of finer feelings, and more elevated taste, appear like the mockery of charity. Is it that by making *the people* strong in knowledge and in virtue, she may fortify herself against decay and overthrow ? Then certainly her means should be well adapted to her end. In this respect pre-eminently the people and the government have but a common interest, so that the kind of education (regardless of its cost) which is best for the one, is best for the other also.

To prevail upon the religious portion of our citizens to send their children to the public schools, it is, or I trust soon will be, indispensable that the government make them in the best sense "schools of morals," schools in which the head shall not be cultivated at the expense of the heart ; and where the faithful domestic efforts of the

parent to instil good principles and to impress good habits shall not be counteracted by the contaminating influences of corrupt associates:

Having brought to a conclusion what I had to say respecting the nature, necessity, and practicability of a system of national education suited to the United States; having stated what I conceive to be the essential features of such a system, and pointed out the *legislative* steps which *should* be taken to put this system into operation, — I shall close this chapter with a brief recurrence to the fundamental idea so prominently referred to at the commencement of my remarks upon this subject in the beginning of the third chapter, viz: “the dependent relation which wise and effective legislation, for the benefit of education in the United States, sustains to public sentiment.”

From the evidence adduced in the previous parts of this volume, I flatter myself there is no room to doubt that the people have been encouraged to trust prematurely and too much to legislative effort for the promotion of education, whilst, as has been shown, legislation from the very nature of things depends for its inception, impulses, direction, and results, upon the popular will; that this dependence is founded in forgetfulness, if not in a mistake as to the nature of our govern-

ments ; that originating in an unfortunate transposition of cause and effect, its existence is calculated to retard the formation of that wholesome public sentiment which, in obedience to the genius of our institutions, is an indispensable preliminary to valuable legislation on this or any other subject, and that governmental action will not only commence just when the people choose, but in its nature, extent, and efficacy, will be precisely what the people wish it, and no more.

It is a distinguishing feature of the Massachusetts system, that almost every thing is left to the people. The part which the legislature acts in the great work of popular education is comparatively trifling ; and it is a most instructive fact, that under this state of things the condition of the public schools is far more healthy, and public satisfaction with their fruits far more general, than in the neighbouring State of Connecticut, where the legislature does every thing, and the people next to nothing.

We have been relying upon the legislatures of some of our States for nearly two centuries ; but what progress have they made ? It is alleged by the best authorities, that in some instances they have even retrograded ; and one of their own committees has declared that “ the system of education, as now supported by the provisions of law, has but little changed with all the astonishing changes which half a century of national inde-

pendence has produced." What ! fifty years elapsed, and no improvement in those systems of free schools on which our national welfare hangs ; and which, so far from being stationary, because perfect and unimprovable, are, in the language of the same committee, "not such as they ought to be ; failing most essentially of accomplishing the high objects for which they were intended !" Assuredly, under such circumstances, longer forbearance would partake of criminality as well as folly.

→ Pennsylvania legislated on the subject forty years and more, having "nearly two hundred laws spread over the journals," but with little or no effect, till some of her citizens, perceiving their mistake, set about the work of arousing public opinion ; the almost immediate result of which has been the adoption of a wise and efficient school system, which is an honour and a blessing to the State.

→ Virginia, too, has been *making laws* almost as long as Pennsylvania, but with comparatively trifling results ; and Kentucky has done her full share of *paper work*, but without a particle of fruit, until last winter, when (the people having become deeply interested in the subject,) her legislature was encouraged to adopt a system which, though defective in not affording sufficiently strong incentives to voluntary taxation, bids fair to do much good through the wise and active efforts of her Superintendent, the Rev. Mr. Bullock.

→ Both of these States have been long and busily

I might specify the same of many other States, in none of which can legislation become efficient until a wholesome state of public sentiment shall have been created. This is the true basis of a system of national education: this is the fountain, according to the nature of whose waters the stream which issues from it will be sweet or bitter, wholesome or injurious. In short, every thing may be done for the cause of popular instruction with *the aid* of public opinion, and without it nothing.

Only let a large and enlightened sentiment prevail among the people as to the value and necessity of education, and instead of objecting, they will invite taxation for its support. In this event, our legislatures will easily find means with which to command the services of able teachers, whilst the prospect of respectable and well paid employment will attract a large amount of educated talent into the seminaries founded by government for the professional training of schoolmasters. The result of all will be, that the public schools will be placed upon a footing to compete with the best private institutions, which, being shorn of their distinctive advantages, must cease to interfere, as they now do, with the public schools; that the entire strength of a neighbourhood may be united in the support of one good school; and that the present tendency of our common school systems, to create one set of schools for the rich, and an inferior set for the poor, dividing society into the well and badly educated castes, will be arrested.

There are numerous and cheering indications that the importance of this view is beginning to be felt throughout the United States. That mighty engine, the political press, is beginning to lend its efforts to quicken and enlighten public sentiment. The *Courier* and the *Traveller* of Boston, the *Gazette* of Salem, the *Aurora* in New-Hampshire, the *Providence Journal*, the *American* and the *Journal of Commerce* in New-York, the *Albany Evening Journal*, the *Newburgh Telegraph*, the *Cayuga Patriot*, the *Newark Daily Advertiser*, the *United States Gazette* of Philadelphia, the *Jeffersonian* of Michigan, the *Baltimore American*, the *Madisonian* and *Intelligencer* of Washington, the *Cincinnati Chronicle*, the *Journal*, and the *Gazette* of Louisville, the *Maysville Eagle*, the *Lexington Observer*, the *Lexington Intelligencer*, the *Russellville Messenger*, the *Nashville Republican*, and the *St. Louis Bulletin*, have all begun to manifest a *practical* interest in the cause of education; and doubtless there are others of which the author has no knowledge.

About a year ago, the public spirited editors of the *Louisville Journal*, proposed to the editors of all the papers in the Mississippi Valley, that they should make an united effort to awaken and inform the public mind upon this subject; and why may not this proposition be revived and extended to every paper in the Union? Only let the political press of our country, bring its gigantic, *undivided*

strength to bear upon this object, and it will not be long before it will be accomplished.

Another animating symptom is, the rapidity with which "Journals of Education" have sprung up in all parts of the Union. Less than three years ago at the house of a distinguished Christian philanthropist in Albany, a proposition was made between two or three friends of education, that they should start a popular paper, to be called the "Common School Assistant;" one promising to defray the expense of an experimental number, if another would prepare the matter. The matter was speedily prepared, *fifty thousand copies* of the number were circulated through the United States; two hundred and sixty agents have been set to work delivering lectures throughout the State of New-York; these lectures have invariably been well attended; sixteen thousand subscribers have been obtained, and eleven hundred thousand copies of the "Common School Assistant" have been distributed, from the profits of which the wages of the lecturers have been paid. Some of the results of this wise and energetic movement are, that the common school cause in New-York has become one of more general and hearty interest than any other; so much so, that the late act of the legislature increasing its common school appropriation from two hundred to four hundred thousand dollars, has been greeted with universal satisfaction; and (what I wished par-



ticularly to notice,) seventeen papers like the Common School Assistant have been established in various parts of the United States.

Here, however, I should not fail to give due credit to a periodical which, more than any other and all others, has helped to produce that beneficial excitement in favour of education which has grown up in our country within the last ten years: I mean the Journal and Annals of Education, published in Boston. To the successive editors of this periodical, Messrs. Russell and Woodbridge, the country owes no ordinary debt of gratitude. The former commenced his labours when the public mind was stagnant on the subject of education, pursuing them through several years of discouragement and loss; and the latter has followed up his efforts with a disinterestedness and zeal that do him honour. Nor is it merely because of their exertions to produce the general excitement in our country, that these gentlemen deserve our thanks. We owe them quite as much and more for having made it that *intelligent* excitement which it is. From first to last, the *improvement*, no less than the *diffusion* of education, has been their aim; and the all-important and comprehensive distinction between "education and instruction" has never been lost sight of for a moment. Another indication of a most animating character, is, that *teachers are embodying themselves into a profession*. They are beginning to feel the im-

portance of their employment, and are preparing to manifest it to the world. With the feeling that their profession is a noble one, they have the magnanimity to own that it is degraded, and accordingly have set themselves to raise it; and if to the energy and wisdom and wide-spread co-operation with which they have gone to work, they will only add a little perseverance, the glorious task of its regeneration, and through it, of the regeneration of society, and the salvation of our institutions will be effected.

Brethren of this honourable calling! let us go forward. There is every thing to animate us. Let us resolve to show not only that "the school-master is abroad," but that he is abroad to some purpose; that he is abroad for good. Let us demonstrate not only that he is active, but that he knows what he is about; and in all our efforts let *improvement and diffusion* be our motto. There is not a more dignified vocation upon earth than ours. Let us becomingly assert its dignity. It is respectable in itself; let us determine that it shall be respected.

American teachers, like the American clergy, are placed in a peculiarly prominent and responsible attitude before the world. They are alike dependent on the efficacy of the voluntary system, and are equally entrusted by the country with the task of demonstrating that it has a self-sustaining, self-impelling, self-expanding power.

The teachers of other countries may have taken the lead in settling the fundamental principles of education ; it devolves on *us* to take the lead in applying them. From the nature of our institutions, we have opportunities and stimulants which they have not. In the monarchical countries of Europe, teachers are the agents, the *creatures* of the government. They are educated by its treasury, directed by its ministry, and live upon its bounty. Consequently they can move no faster, nor in any other direction than the monarch wishes. Here we are independent and untrammelled. The government and the country look to us, not we to the government. The popular mind (in the children of the nation,) is placed at our disposal, and we are solicited to mould it. Beside, its character and condition are in our favour. It is freer, more accessible, more plastic, and less enslaved by prejudices. In the United States we have a more open, unencumbered field than the teachers of the old world. Here there is less to be *undone*. Our start is fair ; our course is clear and broad ; a glorious race invites us ; let us strive to run it with wisdom, energy, and patience.

But what are the clergy of our country doing to excite, direct, and elevate the public sentiment in regard to education ? Where are the ministers of the Gospel, that the pulpit does so little to awaken the slumbers of the Church over the most

comprehensive and important of all human interests, the appropriate education of the young? Is there not too much reason to fear that Christians, *as such*, are not doing their duty in this particular? I will not stop to reply to these inquiries, as I intend devoting to them a separate chapter, and shall merely close with the remark respecting the clergy, that if power and opportunity to do good constitute a measure of obligation, one scarcely knows what limits to assign to theirs, in relation to this subject.

## CHAPTER V.

### AN APPEAL TO THE CLERGY, ON THEIR OBLIGATIONS TO ASSIST IN EXCITING, ELEVATING, AND DIRECT- ING PUBLIC SENTIMENT ON THE SUBJECT OF POPULAR EDUCATION.

It is an interesting fact, pregnant with instruction and obligation, that for almost all the cultivated mind which our country possesses, she is indebted to religion, through the agency of the clergy. The proof of this assertion is short and convincing.

In the first place it is certainly true in regard to Common School education. To prove this, it were sufficient to cite the following preamble to the first act of Massachusetts respecting her schools, passed in May, 1647; which act formed the germ of all the common school systems subsequently adopted throughout the Union:—

“It being the chief project of Satan to keep men from the knowledge of the Scripture, as in former times, keeping them in unknown tongues that so at least the true sense and meaning of the

original might be clouded and corrupted with false glosses of deceivers ; to the end that learning may not be buried in the graves of our forefathers, in church and commonwealth, the Lord assisting our endeavours. It is therefore ordered by this court and authority thereof, that every township within this jurisdiction after the Lord has increased them to fifty house-holders, shall then forthwith appoint one within their towns to teach all such children as shall resort to him, to read and write."

The colony of Connecticut followed next in legislating upon this subject, and in the same spirit. The New-York system is by acknowledgment a combination of the principles of voluntary taxation, which is the dependence of Massachusetts, and of reliance upon a fund which characterizes the Connecticut system ; and it again has been the model chiefly imitated in all the states subsequently legislating upon the subject ; so that *all the provisions for popular education throughout the Union had their origin in the desire of the Puritans to qualify their children to read the word of God.*

In the second place, it is no less true of the education derived from our colleges, and their preparatory schools, that the country is almost exclusively indebted for it to the clergy. In their origin and in their management, they are equally with the common school system, the fruit of reli-

gion. The funds by which they are supported have been collected by the clergy ; and the officers by whom they are conducted are almost exclusively either members of the sacred profession, or candidates preparing for its duties. Legislation has done next to nothing towards endowing the older and more important colleges of the Union ; and of some eighty institutions in our country bearing this name, there are not ten that have not clergymen at their head.

Hitherto there seems to have been a necessity for clerical connexion, in some shape, with our higher literary institutions. This is apparent from the relative condition of colleges founded by government and those belonging to some religious sect. Not only is the number of the latter, at the lowest calculation, ten-fold greater, but in prosperity and success they far outstrip the former. It would be perfectly easy, were it not invidious, to make specifications here, corroborative of this statement ; but this would be superfluous, as they must readily occur to the mind of every one who has been observant of the state and progress of education in his country. A state college cannot stand competition with a denominational institution. The experiment has been repeatedly tried, and with but one issue ; while there have been cases in which, under the pressure of this conviction, state institutions have been handed over to some religious denomination.

From these facts, it is evident that the clergy have had it in their power to give almost any direction they saw proper to the education of the youth of the United States. The question, therefore, very naturally suggests itself, *why have they not made it and kept it strictly moral?* Forty or fifty years ago the Bible was the most common text book in the hands of children. Why was it not retained in schools, and employed with increasing skill and energy, as the divinely appointed instrument for moulding the moral character of the nation? This question cannot be answered, without throwing upon the clergy the blame of too easy a submission to the demands of the anti-religious prejudices, growing out of the political changes effected by the revolution. That the change which we lament was yielded to almost without resistance, is manifest from the absence of documentary evidence to the contrary. Owing to the isolated position of the author at the West, remote from public libraries, it would be wrong for him to assume there are no others; but the pamphlet from the pen of Dr. Rush, already quoted, is the only effort of the kind of which he has any knowledge.

How strong, then, is the obligation resting on the clergy, to exert themselves to the utmost to restore the Bible to its rightful position in the school-house; in other words, to assist in creating a state of public opinion, which shall not only per-



mit, but require the employment of the sacred volume, for the purpose of impressing that religious character upon the children of the nation which the theory of our government, and more especially our critical condition at the present time, so loudly calls for.

But there are many other reasons, of a no less weighty kind, which urgently call upon the clergy to do their best to create a public sentiment which shall give the requisite religious impress to our national education.

The first that I shall mention is, that if this is not done *by them*, it is not likely that it will be done at all. We cannot expect the politicians of the country generally, nor even a sufficient number of them, to exert themselves for this purpose. In all their legislation on the subject, our governments have been totally neglectful of direct provisions for the virtuous education of the young; they have confined their efforts solely to the diffusion of the means of *intellectual instruction*. The statutes of our legislative bodies, in no case, recognise the necessity of educational treatment expressly directed to the moral faculties.

But even had this object been theoretically contemplated, their practical arrangements have been such as would effectually prevent its attainment. The false economy which characterizes all our legislation for the support of common schools, utterly forbids the employment of competent in-

structers ; and without judicious, faithful, conscientious teachers, legislative enactments would have been of no account.

This, however, is not the worst. It would be well if the influence of our political rulers, both in their efforts to obtain office, and in their conduct whilst in office, were even indifferent in its effects on public morals ; but this is very far from being the case. With reference to too large a number, it is decidedly prejudicial : there is scarcely another cause which operates so injuriously. The prevailing spirit of our legislation is not (it is to be feared,) that which would be dictated by the immutable principles of moral science. These, there is reason to apprehend, have too little to do in regulating the proceedings of our legislative bodies. In general, the man who always keeps his conscience about him in a legislative chamber, has not the best prospect of being highly influential. We have heard it gravely objected to two of the brightest ornaments of our national councils, that they would not do for politicians ; “ *they were too conscientious.*” Would that all were obnoxious to this distinguished compliment.

But it is chiefly by an improper system of electioneering that our political rulers exert a deleterious influence on public morals. It is deeply mortifying to see (as we have too frequent occasion,) some of the most prominent politicians of the country, condescending to employ the low arts of

the demagogue for the purpose of securing votes. The miserable pretext of "beating an enemy with his own weapons," will not excuse them. Let it be admitted that without such means, an important election, the most important in the nation, if you please, must terminate unfavourably. Let it so terminate. It were better thus a thousand times repeated, than that the political guardians of the people should steal from them their virtue. Admit it, that without a resort to such expedients, the demagogue may beat the advocate of the constitution and of justice. Then let him beat him. If the people continue virtuous, his career will be short lived. If the people are merely duped by him, there is ground to hope that experience will bring them to their senses. They will in time discover the cheat, will be indignant at the fraud, and will hurl aside the knave with scorn for him and all his measures. In this case there is much to anticipate from the operation of a moral vis medicatrix, the self-correcting tendency of evils. But if the moral sensibilities of the people have been debased, (and what so likely to do this as the bad example of those whom the nation looks to with respect ?) there is no hope ; all recuperative power in the body politic is lost, and there is nothing to prevent the progress of corruption ; the corrupting and the corrupted becoming more corrupt, until the country shall be forced to take refuge in the dictatorship of a military despot.

There are few things more revolting to our moral feelings than to see an influential politician proud of the celebrity which he may have acquired for tact in electioneering ; to hear him boast of the adroitness with which he has appealed to the grovelling prejudices of the people, thus dignifying in their eyes the arts and trickery of the reckless demagogue, sanctifying measures which he should denounce with indignation, making habitual, what but for his concurrence, would be only occasional, stereotyping evils which but for his example, would be transient, and sapping with his own hands the true foundation of all government, whilst he is proclaimed to be the enemy of agrarianism, the supporter of the constitution and of moral order. Misled by such examples, is it any wonder that the people should never question their right to vote for whom they please ; to give their suffrages, for instance, to him who can crack the best joke, tell the best story, sing the best song, drink the most freely, and scatter his money most profusely, without taking into consideration the intellectual and moral qualifications of the candidate.

From these considerations, it is perfectly obvious we cannot expect that measures calculated to produce the moral improvement of society by means of christianized education will *originate* with our governments. By the government, I mean of course, the representatives of the people, who, for selfish considerations, too often accom-

modate their official conduct to the *existing* tastes and wishes of the people. Hence, they are almost always found to act in the rear, and at the bidding of public sentiment. In a republic the government derives its character from the people, not the people from the government. If therefore public reform at any time be necessary, it must have its origin elsewhere than with those whose interested subserviency to the popular will is apt to lead them to obey it even at so high a cost as disobedience to the commands of conscience and the law of God.

Let the people once demand the introduction of religious influences into their schools, and their representatives will be prompt enough to order it. But it is essential that the desire pre-exist in the minds of the people; whence it is perfectly clear, that to expect a hearty movement on the part of our governments in favour of religious education previously to a favourable change in public sentiment, produced by some other agency than theirs, is to look for an effect prior to the operation of its cause. Our legislatures, therefore, however indispensable their final action, (and of this I have not a doubt) cannot be depended on to *introduce spontaneously* so great an improvement as that of reuniting intellectual and moral culture, of imparting to the education of the youth of our country, a moral character, derived from the principles and precepts of the Bible.

Another reason urgently calling upon the clergy to use their best endeavours to have a religious, that is, a *truly moral* character impressed upon the youth of our country, through the instrumentality of the Bible employed in the common schools, is, that *under existing circumstances*, there is no other possible way of effecting it.

*The means at present relied upon are altogether inadequate.* These are the *Family*, the *Pulpit*, the *Sunday-school*, and *Boarding-schools*.

In the first place parents are not to be depended on to give a religious education to the children of the nation.

There are not a few who would oppose any steps being taken toward introducing the Bible and religious influences into the public schools, because of the impression that children ought to be taught religion at home by their parents, or at church by their ministers. There would be something of plausibility in this position, if religion were brought to bear judiciously and with energy in forming the character of the youth of the country under the domestic roof or in the church. But if it be true, as unquestionably is the fact, that the religious culture of the young is notoriously neglected by a majority of families, and but very imperfectly executed by far the larger part of those who do attempt it, the force of this objection is lost.

I grant that parents are the proper persons to

superintend the moral culture of their offspring ; and if they would only do their duty, there would be but little left to be accomplished through the agency of the schoolmaster. Families are the elements of a nation ; and if all these were rightly disciplined there would be little or nothing defective in the aggregate. I concur most heartily with those who would do reverence to national institutions. Of these the family organization is pre-eminently one ; and I would cordially deprecate all artificial arrangements which tend in the slightest manner to impair or supersede its operation.

The goodness and the wisdom of God are in nothing more conspicuously displayed than in the admirable provision he has made for nurturing the germ of intellect and feeling which distinguish the human being. Where in the whole range of nature and of art can there be found so complete and beautiful an exemplification of the division of labour ? The mighty work of educating an entire generation is constantly going on in our world ; and yet the task is so distributed, that for the cultivation of every half a dozen minds there are provided two instructors. The circumstances too under which the teachers and the taught are brought together, are the most favourable that can be imagined for accomplishing the end proposed. What facility is not provided ? What requisite for the organization of a perfect school is

wanting? The number of pupils is small. They are placed completely at the disposal of their teachers, whose authority divine and human laws conspire to support. They come on in succession, so that the society and example of the older may facilitate the education of the younger; which leads me to remark in passing, that it would be difficult to over-estimate the importance of rightly training the first born child. They come under the tuition of their parents with minds peculiarly susceptible of impression, with a mental appetite which is insatiable, with a proneness to imitation that seldom fails to transform them into the image of their models, having no prejudices to be eradicated, no bad habits to be undone. The material is fresh, its ductility is perfect, and there is ample time, even the entire period intervening between infancy and manhood, allowed to give it the desired shape. In short, every thing is provided, every thing is complete, and nothing is wanting but that parents do their duty. But alas for suffering humanity! here is just the point of failure. *Parents do not do their duty.* This vale of tears would long since have been reconverted into one universal Eden, from which, but for the infirmities attendant upon age, we should scarcely wish to escape for the sake of obtaining superior felicity had parents done their duty; and the brightness of the millennial morning will never illumine our earth *till* parents do their duty. But as things are at pre-



sent, parents cannot do their duty ; and that they cannot is perhaps more their misfortune than their fault. Such is the state of miseducation which almost universally prevails, that they are not prepared beforehand and qualified to do it : and in such a case can it be deemed officious that public sentiment should interpose, and by the agency of well constituted schools try to have the rising generation prepared for the responsible stations which await them ? and, above all, for this the most responsible, the most important ?

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The church, too, is scarcely less negligent than the family, of the religious training of the young ; the spiritual pastor than the parent.

The pulpit contributes very little, *in a direct manner*, toward the moral education of children. They cannot derive much benefit in the way of instruction from hearing sermons. The Sunday efforts of the clergyman are adapted almost exclusively to adults. The greatest benefit we can now expect for our children from taking them to church, is, the formation of church-going habits and the cultivation of reverence for the sanctuary and the Sabbath.

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Nor does the too much lauded, or rather the *too indiscriminately* lauded Sunday-school system, supply the defects of the pulpit in this respect.

I yield to none in thankfulness for the good which this noble institution has achieved. The name of Robert Raikes will "be had in everlasting remembrance" as a benefactor of his race. Estimating the value of the Sunday-school, retrospectively, by a comparison with what had been done for the religious education of children prior to its institution, it must be regarded as an admirable advance upon nothing,—upon almost total neglect of this duty. But when we form our opinion of its worth from a consideration of its fitness, and its competency to effect the religious culture of all the children in our country, I feel constrained to regard it in the light of a temporary and most inadequate expedient.

I wish it to be distinctly understood, however, that I criticise it as a friend, not as an opposer. I conceive it to be my duty to do so, because it appears to me that the Church is too much disposed to regard it as the "ne plus ultra" of provisions of this sort. I wish to aid in producing the conviction, that, with reference to the obstacles to the religious education of the young, she has not yet passed over Jordan; and that it is too soon to take up her rest, as though she had attained the consummation of what is desirable in the way of moral attentions to the lambs of Christ's flock. I would merely remind her that she has taken but the very first step toward this result; that "there remaineth yet much land to be possessed," and that she should still "go on unto perfection."

Estimating it by the criterion above proposed, the Sunday-school system cannot fail to be regarded as a most imperfect provision for the religious education of the young.

1. In the first place, it embraces and can embrace but a very small proportion of the children of the country. It is supposed that there must be in the United States something like four millions of children. Of these it may be doubted whether one-eighth are in *constant* attendance upon Sabbath-schools. It will not do to rely upon the published numbers in making this calculation, for these are but the aggregate of nominal attendants; and every Sabbath-school teacher knows that between this list and the number of those who derive much benefit from habitual presence in the Sunday-school, the difference is painfully great.

Nor is it in the power of Christian benevolence to increase the number of regular attendants very much. There are impediments in the way over which it has no control. The want of teachers must for a long time to come effectually preclude the multiplication of Sabbath-schools in the United States much beyond their present numbers. It is not for want of suitable exertions that more of the children of the nation are not already enrolled in Sunday-schools. The annals of benevolent effort scarcely afford an instance of liberal enterprise comparable to that which within a few years back has lavishly scattered the money of

northern Christians over the southern and western portions of the Union to build up Sunday-schools within their limits. But have the *permanent* results been at all proportioned to the exertions made? It is painful to every friendly observer, resident within the Mississippi Valley, to witness the ephemeral existence that has too often awaited the fruits of such liberal and well-meant efforts. It may be that the vanity of agents has been flattered, and the good feelings of central Boards of Managers gratified by the splendid *numerical* success which they have been able to publish; but it is, notwithstanding, true, that in very many cases, the type has not been dried from having impressed the name of a Sunday-school upon the pages of their report, before that school has ceased to have a being. It is quixotic benevolence to attempt to establish Sabbath-schools where teachers are not to be had. The body is not more dependent for its vitality upon the soul, than is a school upon a teacher.

The difficulty of procuring teachers is the greatest, too, precisely in the region where it is most desirable that Sunday-schools should be established, viz. in the country; for it is here, that owing to our agricultural habits, the mass of the population are to be found. It follows as a corollary from these facts, that the Sabbath-school system is practicable only or chiefly in towns and villages, which probably do not contain one-tenth

of our inhabitants, and therefore is not fitted to meet the moral necessities of the children of the United States at large. When we see how difficult it is to keep up a good set of Sunday-school teachers in our cities, and how much harder still it is in villages, we should be driven to *anticipate* that it would be almost impossible in country situations; and such experience has proved to be the fact.

2. Another objection to relying upon Sunday-schools for the religious education of the youth of the country, is, the general *incompetency* of the teachers.

There is scarcely a single qualification requisite to make a good teacher which is not wanting in a large majority of those who officiate as such in Sunday-schools. They are for the most part young men and women who are without experience in teaching, and therefore without skill. They are under no responsibility other than that which their own consciences voluntarily impose. They are too commonly irregular in their attendance; and if they do attend, their own notions of religious truth are so crude and ill-digested, that they have occasion themselves to learn what they profess to teach. But are not experience, and skill, and responsibility, and constancy, and knowledge, full as necessary in those who attempt to teach religion, as in those who teach arithmetic? To train the affections, to form the habits,

to infuse good sentiments, to inspire love to God and man, is universally conceded to impose a harder task than to train the understanding. It is strange reasoning then, by which we arrive at the conclusion, that on this account inferior teachers are adapted to its execution.

The result of all this is, that the benefits derived from attending Sunday-schools are too often of questionable value. I speak advisedly when I say that some of those most prominently and efficiently connected with the Sunday-school system, in our largest cities, are so fully persuaded of its imperfection, that but for the sake of consistency they would not subject their children to its influences.

3. Another reason for believing the Sabbath-school to be an inadequate expedient, is founded on the small amount of time during which its pupils are attended to, and the length of the interval occurring between these opportunities.

It will not suffice that children receive religious instruction only one or two hours in a week. Allowing ten hours for sleep, there are still fourteen during the day, or near a hundred in the week, in which most of children are awake and active, receiving impressions and forming habits. It surely, then, ought not to satisfy the consciences of their spiritual superintendents, that they have made provisions for the fiftieth part of this period.

Beside, children require *moderate and oft repeated attentions*. This is a law which none can

disregard with safety who would be successful teachers of the young. Their moral wants are daily ; I may say hourly : so should be the attention paid them. When the intervals between the periods of instruction are too long, there is danger lest all good impressions be effaced before they can be followed up and confirmed by others. Who does not admire the philosophy of the scriptural rule, "Line upon line, and precept upon precept ; here *a little* and there a little ?" It seems almost superfluous to add, that the Sunday-school mode of teaching runs counter to this rule.

4. Another consideration calculated to inspire diffidence of the Sabbath-school system, and to repress extravagant expectations with regard to its *permanent* advantages, is, that there is danger lest it should encourage a neglect of domestic education, and thus tend to perpetuate the evils it was designed to remedy.

It is universally true, that we are not so likely to attend to that which others will do for us ; and there is reason to fear lest even some conscientious persons, who feel it to be a sacred duty to "train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," should be induced, by the lofty ideas they entertain of the Sabbath-school, in consequence of the unmeasured praise bestowed upon it, to suppose that comparatively little is left for them to do at home.

I look upon the whole Sabbath-school system

as a choice of evils. It is a very imperfect means of religious cultivation, which is made extremely valuable in consequence of the flagrant neglect of parents, to whom Providence has committed the great and responsible task of the moral education of the young. If every family were managed as it should be ; if every father and mother did their duty, in the way of the religious instruction of their children, there would be little or no occasion for Sunday-schools *as they are at present conducted*. All that is *now* done in them, and a great deal more, would be better done at home. But as a majority of parents are shamefully remiss in this respect ; and as children, for the most part, are precluded the advantages of that tuition which God designed for them, — and which, therefore, must be the best, — it is unquestionably to their interest that this foster system of education should be introduced. However defective, it is better than absolute neglect.

The history of Sabbath-schools shows that they had their origin in the want of fidelity in parents. The idea was first suggested to their illustrious founder by his sympathy for the little outcasts, who on the Sabbath roamed about the streets of his native city as lambs without a shepherd, being treated by their proper spiritual guardians as if they had no souls. The whole system, therefore, must evidently be regarded in the light of a charity ; and, as it is with all public charities, — the poor-



rates of England, for example, — great caution is requisite lest it be so managed as to encourage the evil it was designed to remedy.

It will not suffice to reply to this by saying that religious education is better attended to in families *now* than it was before the institution of Sabbath-schools. Is the improvement by any means so great as it would have been had the advocates of Sabbath-schools incessantly proclaimed the unalienable nature of parental responsibility; and whilst they cheerfully imparted religious instruction to their children, had reminded, at least, pious fathers and mothers that they were permitting them to do their work, and were thereby convicted of an omission for which they should have to give account before the Judge of quick and dead? Has not this idea been rather kept out of view by the almost unmeasured admiration which the system has attracted to itself? — by the homage it has accepted, if not courted, at the hands of the community? Is the splendour which accompanies its Fourth of July, and other public celebrations, calculated to make the consciences of beholding parents sore at the recollection of their remissness? — to start the idea that *Sabbath-schools are so many asylums for spiritual orphans*? — and that the thousands of scholars who swell the gay procession are so many refugees from domestic unfaithfulness?

I am delightfully aware that Sunday-schools

often exert a happy reflex influence upon families. I know that immense good has been done by their making children, (through their tasks, their conversation, and their library books,) indirectly the religious teachers of ungodly parents. I grant all this, and a great deal more, in favour of this noble product of Christian philanthropy, for, I repeat it, I am a friend, an ardent, *practical* friend, of the Sunday-school system ; and yet I do maintain, most consistently as I believe, that the progress of religious education is kept back by a cherished misconception (not intentional,) of its true design, its nature, and its power. The question is not, whether religious education is more attended to than formerly by families ; but is it as much attended to as it might have been under the influence of appropriate and incessant effort, distinctly directed to this object during the whole of the half century that Sunday-schools have been in existence ?

What I feel disposed to complain of is, that the spirit with which these schools have been conducted, has had a tendency to repress a conviction of the necessity for such efforts. I do complain that the self-complacent satisfaction with which the Church regards her Sabbath-schools, the *unqualified* praise which she bestows upon them, does tend to quiet in too great a degree the consciences of even pious parents ; and worst of all, to divert the public mind from the true nature

and importance of the family constitution. This is God's provision for the moral education of the young, and we should be extremely careful how we attempt to improve on what he pronounces good. For this, man can find no substitute, no equivalent. Parental accountability does not admit of being delegated. The father and the mother are the divinely appointed spiritual guardians of their children, for whom no proxies can be found. When these are brought to understand and do their duty, and not before, we may hope to witness the moral renovation of the world.

Yet where is the Sabbath-school society that holds this idea up with sufficient earnestness and prominence to the Church's view? Does it not engross their efforts to magnify their own importance? — to promote their prosperity by producing inflated ideas of their own efficacy? Is not the Sunday-school proclaimed to be the great device, the moral engine, by which the reformation of society is to be effected?

Where is the Sabbath-school association that habitually and practically recognises its true subordinate relation to the family institution? Do the spirit and the manner in which they are habitually eulogized tend to impress it upon the hearts and consciences of Christians, that in their highest state of perfection the best that Sabbath-schools can do, is, to aid domestic effort? That the most valuable corps of Sunday-school

teachers are but auxiliaries to parents? Is not the tendency rather to make that be looked upon as primary, which is, by Divine arrangement, secondary? The parent is now regarded and treated as the auxiliary to the Sunday-school teacher; fathers and mothers, in too many cases, as the aids to boys and girls!

I grant that Sunday-schools do, in some measure, induce parents to attend to their children at home. But does this follow as part of their plan — and the principal part? If the system is fitted to have this most desirable effect, why has it not been employed for the purpose more directly and more earnestly? Why has not this been avowed to be its most prominent, its paramount object?

But let us not mistake as to the amount of domestic effort induced by Sabbath-schools. It is not so great as some may think it. *It amounts to little more than assisting children to get their Sunday-school lesson.* The parent is not incited to put forth other and more extended and independent effort. And is one lesson a week enough for the spiritual nourishment of children? Children, let it never be forgotten, have the same moral natures with their parents. Their wants, therefore, are the same, and should be met in a similar way. They recur just as often, and should be supplied when and as often as they require. Their passions are the same and need the same restraints. Their appetites, for the most part, are the same,

and require equal care to keep them from running to excess. They have the same disinclination to the duties of devotion, and stand in need of the same incitements. The principle of selfishness in them is as constantly busy ; they have occasion, therefore, for as constant encouragement to resist it. Benevolence in them is no less sluggish than in adults, and demands the same reiterated excitement. Their hopes and fears and desires are just as active as those of grown persons, and need *hourly* guidance quite as much.

In short, the way to make and keep a human being religious, is the same with a child as with a person of riper years. There is not one code of laws and one set of promises in the Bible for children, and another for grown persons. No old Christian can thrive unless he read his Bible *daily*. No more can a young one. The adult Christian is required to "pray without ceasing." So must the youthful disciple. And thus it is in regard to the practice of repentance, self-examination, and every other duty. As I have said before, the entire provision made in the Bible for the moral education of children, consists in simply telling parents how to do and what to be, and then enjoining that they make their children like themselves.

The amount of religious attention *daily* required by each child is something like this. Beside employing the almost innumerable opportunities for

incidental instruction,—that invaluable expedient which our Lord employed so often and so happily, — there should be the morning and evening family devotion. A verse or two of Scripture should be committed to memory, and repeated at night. There should be, at least, one Bible lesson of a prudent length, to be studied exegetically, and as one of a series of lessons, running through the sacred volume. In the morning affectionate warning and counsel should be given, and with considerable specialty, as to the duties and dangers of the day ; and in the evening the child should be gently assisted in reviewing its events, and kindly blamed or praised, as his conduct may have been marked by faults or virtues.

There is nothing of extravagance in this demand. It requires nothing more than compliance with the scriptural injunction, “ These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart : and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children ; and *shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*” The amount of effort it prescribes is perfectly easy to the child and to the parent, *if the law of distribution* be properly observed. The labour specified is most easy and agreeable to those who practise it most punctually. It chiefly consists in giving the line upon line ; the precept (not precepts) upon precept ; now *a little*, and by and by a little, not (a great

deal) more. All of children's lessons should be short, but they should occur at short intervals. "Little and often," is the maxim for their teachers.

Now, where can these requisitions be complied with, but *in the family*, and *by the parents*, especially the mother? How meagre and unphilosophical is the Sabbath-school provision in comparison with this! and how poorly adapted to the versatile minds of children! A single lesson during a period requiring at least a hundred, looks like spiritual starvation. A grown Christian would pine under such treatment: a young one cannot flourish on it.

I object, then, to the Sabbath-school system, not that it does not do good, but the *unmixed* good it might do; not that it is praised, but that it is praised in too unqualified a manner. I complain not that it undertakes to *aid* in the religious education of the young, but that it attempts too much,—even the whole; and, by engrossing it, conflicts with the indispensable arrangement God has made to effect this purpose.

If the Sabbath-school system profess to have made an arrangement for the moral culture of the young, which is inherently better than that of the family organization, then it reflects upon the wisdom and the goodness of the Creator. If it contemplate itself as a substitute for this, then by exonerating parents, and making their exertions useless, it is guilty of the irreligious attempt of

trying to sunder an indissoluble obligation ; and if it regard itself as merely the auxiliary of fathers and mothers, — the only light in which its permanent existence is desirable, — then we have but to lament that, in its practice, it mistakes so widely, or so entirely forgets, its true design and office.

Before leaving this subject, I must be permitted to address a word or two to parents, in relation to that duty which, next to love to God, I conceive to be the first of human duties ; I mean the duty of paying early, incessant, *personal* attentions to the moral education of their children.

Since the sum and substance of the divine plan, respecting our fallen race, is the restoration of the soul to holiness, it might reasonably be expected that suitable provision, in all respects, had been made for accomplishing this benevolent intention. Accordingly, as part of the arrangements for this purpose, we find that every individual is placed in circumstances the most favourable which can be imagined, for the developement of his spiritual nature, and for preparing him, from the opening of his existence for being useful on this earthly theatre, and for a final abode in the mansions of holiness and bliss. The human being is ushered into existence apparently in the most dependent and pitiable condition ; utterly incapable of doing any thing for himself, either bodily or mentally. He is the picture of helplessness itself : but he is far from being destitute. Instantly on appearing in



the world he is appropriated by an affection which knows no limits, either in duration or in strength. He finds two watchful guardians prepared to claim him, whose greatest happiness thenceforth is, to arise from devotion to his welfare. He is, in reality, not more dependent upon them than they on him. They are impelled to serve him by parental love, — a feeling stronger than death, — involuntary, — intense beyond description, — and completely untransferable. “Floods cannot drown it, — waters cannot quench it.” Nor is it a blind and unenlightened feeling. It has intelligence as well as strength; since it is allied with experience and maturity of being.

One of the most interesting objects in creation is a new-born infant. Whether we limit our contemplations to his physical frame, the exquisitely planned machine with which he is to act on the material world, the wisdom of its contrivance or the benevolence of its adaptations; or whether we turn our meditations to the immortal spirit by which it is animated, “the divinity that dwells within;” or whether we contemplate the sublimity of his relations to the finite and the infinite, to time and to eternity, to man and to his Maker, to this world and the next; we are lost in amazement, reverence, and awe. Devoted mother, little dost thou know to what thou hast given birth! Fond and joyous parents, little do ye realize the stupendous task you have incurred! The little

babe, whose helpless frame is fondled in your arms or dandled on your knee, is more than to your outward eye it seems to be. It is a germ whose expansion will be boundless. It is an emanation from the Deity ; a fiend or angel in disguise ; and on you devolves the tremendous responsibility of choosing its destiny — whether it shall prove a blessing or a scourge to this world, a demon or an arch-angel in the world to come.

And think not to evade the duties of your station, nor to shift its obligations. You have voluntarily assumed a relation from which death only can release you ; your accountability cannot be alienated. For yourselves there is no substitute. You cannot delegate the duties of your office to others. You may surround yourselves with hired teachers, and with any other facilities your means allow ; but remember they are but auxiliaries ; you yourselves are to be its educators. You may appropriate the aids afforded by the Sabbath-school ; but beware how you suffer its advantages to curtail your own devotedness. To you has the keeping and the culture of an immortal spirit been committed, and of you solely will an account of its treatment be exacted.

Here, however, I would take occasion to suggest a caution, for which I am indebted to a mother whose fidelity and skill in managing her children are above all praise ; a caution which, as she maintains, is made particularly necessary by the

tenour of the writings, and the tone of public sentiment on early education within the last half century. From the venerable Pestalozzi down to the most recent author, the general tendency has been to concentrate on the mother the whole of parental responsibility in relation to the education of the young. This is certainly a mistake, and a serious one. The mother is not even principal in this momentous business. The only direction respecting the management of children given in the New Testament is addressed to *fathers*: "and ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath, but train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." This implies most philosophically the whole of moral education.

Every where, both in the Old and New Testament, the father is regarded as the head of the family. In him resides the authority, and consequently his is the chief responsibility. The woman was formed only as a *help-mate* to Adam; and such is the mother to the father in the management of children. The facts that she is peculiarly fitted by natural disposition for the delightful task, and that the customary distribution of social duties afford her facilities and opportunities which are denied her husband, do not exonerate the father from his obligations as king of his little empire. This he cannot part with. It is inseparable from the relation which he occupies.

True, it is impossible to overrate the impor-

tance of the mother. Her aid is indispensable, and the circumstances above alluded to designate the part she has to act. On her, of right, devolve the numberless details of execution which the father's avocations forbid his seeing to. Still his is none the less the duty of attending to the education of his children, because the part assigned him is that of supervision. This does not usually lessen the responsibility nor care of a president, a governor, a general, or an overseer, in any station. To the father it belongs to plan and to direct, to study and to read, that he may be able to assist, with suitable counsel, his more dependent agent ; to sustain her by his authority ; to furnish, to the best of his ability, all the requisite facilities for a pleasant and successful execution of her task ; and especially so to regulate the arrangements of the household, both as to various domestic conveniences and to help, that the mother shall have ample and uninterrupted leisure to perform her part in the common task of training up their offspring in the way that they should go.

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I come next to speak of the moral influence of the boarding-school system ; and here I feel constrained to remark that of all the means proposed for accomplishing the great work of moral education, boarding-schools are the most imperfect

and exceptionable. They are wrong in principle ; anti-republican in their tendency ; unfriendly to the spread of education ; appropriable by few ; while for the most part they disappoint the expectations they excite.

They are wrong in principle, because they conflict with the natural institution provided for the moral training of the young, the family organization. The general theory of boarding-schools is, that they are large families under a delegated parental government. Now what does this imply, but that strangers can take better care of a large number of children, than the natural guardians whom infinite wisdom has provided, can of a few ? that is, that man can make better arrangements for his moral well being than God has made ; can improve upon the plans devised by infinite perfection ?

Even under the choicest circumstances, boarding-schools must of necessity be wanting in some of the most delicate, yet powerful means of moral influence which appertain to the family, and which can never be imitated in any artificial institution. For example, the chief source of moral influence in the family is in the mother,—in “ woman’s love ;” and who will have the presumption to undertake to find an equivalent for a pious, faithful, and judicious mother ? In her affectionate rebuke, her fond embrace, her smiles, her tears, her kiss, her look of approbation ; there is a winning influence,

a subduing power, a transforming efficacy, which we should seek in vain in any other quarter. Now all these are lost to children sent to boarding-schools.

Again ; there is nothing which can compensate for the loss of the softening and refining effects of female society upon the harsher character of males. Accordingly, infinite goodness has placed boys in a situation, where they grow up and form their character, in constant and intimate association with a mother, with sisters, and perhaps with other female relatives. Boarding-schools deprive them entirely of these advantages, and confine them to the society of males.

Another evil of great magnitude connected with educating boys away from home, is, that it tends to lessen filial and fraternal love. I know it may be said, and correctly too, that separation often gives intensity to family affection. But this is true only of absence which is occasional and temporary. The effect of that which is habitual and permanent is just the reverse ; and to derive the full benefit of boarding-school instruction, boys must continue at them from four to seven years.

Another great and irremediable defect in the boarding-school system, is, that out of school hours *it throws children for the most part into the society of children.* In the family where God has placed them, their association is, or may be, chiefly with

daults. Such is evidently the design of Providence, in which we discover equal benevolence and wisdom. It is exactly suited to the laws of the imitative propensity which he has made exceedingly strong in children, which contributes more than all other things together to form their disposition, character, and manners. Character of almost every description is borrowed. There are few originals in the world; indeed, none that are absolutely such. This is true of men separately and in masses; of families; neighbourhoods; communities; nations and generations, as well as of individuals. We are in almost all respects copied from our seniors; we are but transcripts of which they are the originals. There is no influence comparable in strength to that of mental friction, the action of mind on mind, of heart on heart. We imperceptibly and involuntarily imbibe the disposition and sentiments of those with whom we associate;—iron in contact with a magnet is not more sure to acquire its mysterious property. Hence the infinite importance of putting proper models before children. Accordingly a wise and benevolent Creator, by the family arrangement, places them in immediate and constant association with a couple of individuals whose characters *are formed*, and ought to be, and may be, such as it would be desirable for them to imitate.

The principle of boarding-schools is directly

opposed to this arrangement. Providence locates children in the society of adults. Boarding-schools transfer them to the society of children. God places them in contact with matured character. Boarding-schools bring them in juxtaposition with that which is unformed and immature.

It will not do to say, as an offset to this objection, that at boarding-schools their teachers mingle with the children in their plays, and superintend even their hours of relaxation. I know this is the theory ; but, generally speaking, its execution is impracticable, partly from the fact that children, when they have an opportunity, prefer, and will have, the society of those of their own age ; and partly from the difficulty (the impossibility I might almost say,) of getting teachers, in any numbers, who from natural disposition, or for conscience sake, acquire the art of completely identifying themselves with their pupils, and who feel a proper solicitude for their moral as well as their intellectual improvement.

The social propensity in children is surprisingly strong ; and if its cravings be not allowed too many other opportunities of indulgence, they will be perfectly happy and contented in the *profitable* society of their parents. But, on the contrary, if we give them a chance to gratify this instinct, either at home or in the neighbourhood, or at the boarding-school, by associating *with other children*, they will invariably do so, and will be far more under



each other's influence than under that of adults. As a teacher and a father, I know not that I could state another fact of equal moment on the subject of practical education. The most powerful moral influence to which children can be subjected resides in their playmates. There is a public sentiment in the play-ground which is altogether irresistible. Moral courage is a virtue which presupposes a good deal of experience. It is the fruit of cultivation, and is rare among adults. It cannot, therefore, be expected that children should possess it in an eminent degree; and yet, in their association with each other, there is no virtue of which they have greater need. In a miscellaneous assemblage of twenty children, there will, in nine cases out of ten, be some whose moral culture has been neglected; and all other things being equal, a bad boy will have far greater influence than a good one.

For proof of the truth of these assertions, it is quite sufficient that I refer the reader to his recollections of his school-boy days. Among children, as among adults, the decidedly good are in a small minority; and those whose principles and habits have not acquired a very unusual strength, are extremely apt to become assimilated to the mass. It is hard for human nature not to "follow the multitude to do evil." There are few tendencies stronger than that which urges men to fall in with the popular current. It is difficult for an

adult to be singular ; it must be much more so for a child. Every collection of children have their habits of thinking, — of feeling, — and of acting ; and no where is fashion more arbitrary and tyrannical than in the juvenile circle.

In the region of country where the author passed his childhood, false and premature notions of manliness, cherished about the school-house, did more harm (as is manifest from the subsequent history of his playmates,) than almost any other cause to which his mind reverts. In the youthful community, — where to smoke, to drink, to swear, are looked upon as indications of a man ; where the independent lad is he who can laugh at the restraints of conscience, and affect a swaggering indifference to domestic authority ; who can crack his jokes about the adroitness with which he cheats “ the old man,” or “ the old woman,” by evading their laws ; in short, whose boast is, that he does as he pleases ; the virtue of even a young Socrates would scarce be safe. Escape from corruption, in such a case, is certainly providential, — not to say miraculous.

Now, this is the case, in a greater or less degree, in every society of children. They *will* have their private communications of sentiments and feelings ; the most rigid system of espionage would not be able to prevent it ; and in despite of every precaution to the contrary, these will do more to form their character than all the direct or indirect in-

struction of their teachers. Hence it is, that, generally speaking, the pupils do more to give character to the school, than the school to give character to them.

The most delightful specimens of correct moral education I have ever seen, have been in cases where the chief society of children, for a number of years together, had been that of their parents; and where, by a kind of moral absorption, the sentiments and feelings of the father and the mother had been imperceptibly transfused into the bosoms of their offspring. But, in all such instances that I have had an opportunity to notice, the circumstances of the family were such, *that the children had not the choice of the society of children*. This seems indispensable. Give them such a choice, and in a large majority of instances, they will prefer it. I am sure I speak to the experience of such parents as feel the importance of this principle, and yet whose circumstances are adverse to its application. They know how hard it is to make their children love *their* company, when there are in the neighbourhood other boys and girls who are constantly soliciting association with them.

Even with the choicest corps of teachers, then, the evils that arise from too much juvenile society could not be prevented; but where is the superintendent of a boarding-school who is, at all times, able to command just such a set of teachers as he could desire, and as he stands in need of? The

usual requirements of scholarship and aptness to teach, (the latter of which few possess in an eminent degree,) are nothing in comparison with the moral qualifications that should appertain to an assistant in a boarding-school. He must be able to practise a playful familiarity with his pupils, and yet maintain his dignity ; in other words, to be the boy and the man at the same time. He must possess the extremely rare quality of governing with strictness, and yet of making his subjects love him. If he relax in discipline, he will cease to be respected ; and if he rigidly enforce authority, there is danger lest he be disliked.

But this is very far from being the whole of the difficulty. To realize the theory of a boarding-school, all its teachers must be men *possessing an unusual degree of piety*. From a just and necessary regard to economy, they are for the most part unmarried men ; and yet they are professedly appointed to perform the most difficult and solemn of parental duties. Their benevolence of disposition, and their sensibility of conscience, therefore, must be truly great to enable them to execute with constancy, fidelity, and skill, the arduous task of training up the young in the ways of piety and virtue without either the impulse or support of the parental instinct. If even religious *fathers* can reconcile it to themselves to be remiss in the moral culture of their sons, (and few things are more common,) how great is the im-

probability that a set of youths, not at all related to them, should be more conscientious and painstaking? That system cannot be susceptible of general application, nor be otherwise than theoretically good, whose execution depends upon the contingency of finding young men who shall be more concerned for the moral welfare of children than *pious parents* are themselves. As a rare occurrence, such an instance may possibly be found; but the general rule, from the very nature of things, must be different.

From long experience, I know something of the difficulty of obtaining really good assistants *for merely intellectual instruction*. Every head of a college or extensive school, knows how hard it is to be suited in this respect. A distinguished professor, (whose name, were I at liberty to use it, would add great weight to the statement,) once informed me, that in the course of eighteen years, and with the opportunity of an annual choice from graduating classes, he had not been able to get more than two or three tutors to please him. As a general rule, young men who are ushers, teach solely for the remuneration. This being their principal inducement, it is not to be expected that they will bestow more attention to their pupils than will barely satisfy their contract. If they devote themselves assiduously and faithfully during the six or seven tuition hours, their task is done. They then desire relaxation, or

they wish to study for their own improvement. It rarely indeed occurs that principle or inclination causes assistant teachers to pay extra attention to their pupils. Now if this be the case where intellectual education is exclusively or chiefly aimed at, how greatly must the improbability of procuring suitable assistants be increased both in number and in force, where the formation of the manners, and the cultivation of the affections are attempted?

I grant that it is better for a child to be at a good boarding-school, than in a bad family ; and it is precisely upon this principle that boarding-schools, as well as Sunday-schools, have become necessary ; for far be it from me to wage an unconditional warfare against these institutions. I grant that the *imperfect* moral training which can be given at boarding-schools and Sunday-schools is *a less evil*, and therefore better than almost total neglect at home ; and that on this account they are made not only necessary but desirable. Whilst I say this, however, I would be very careful to state that I consider them desirable *only as temporary substitutes* ; and so far as I animadvert upon them at all, I do it chiefly because their real object appears to have been misconceived, and they seem to have been offered to the world *as permanent expedients, affording greater moral advantages than can be enjoyed under any other circumstances*. I have yet to see the prospectus of

the boarding-school, and to hear the first speech in favour of Sabbath-schools, which shall mourn over the necessity of establishing such institutions, and which shall strive to rebuke the awful remissness (for it is awful in its consequences,) of those fathers and mothers, who, instead of nursing the religious and moral character of their offspring within the sacred precincts of the family, can reconcile it to themselves (and too frequently for no better reason than to get rid of trouble,) to send them off to moral hospitals.

While, therefore, I admit that "it is better for a child to be at a good boarding-school than in a bad family," I must maintain that a bad family is preferable, in point of moral influence, to a bad boarding-school, and a good family to a good boarding-school. If the former had over the latter no other advantage than in size, this were sufficient. For the great purpose of moral education, Providence has distributed the young of the human family into schools not exceeding an average of five or six. Boarding-schools would assemble them by fifties, or by hundreds. Even under the most perfect organization, a boarding-school is not entitled to the appellation of a family at all, since it is necessarily destitute of some of the most essential qualities of this divine institution, a family being a society of the nearest relatives, and of both sexes; neither of which can in any case be true of the best boarding-school. But

conceding its right to the title which it generally assumes, a boarding-school is still *an overgrown family*, in which *many different sets of children* are assembled ; and this circumstance alone, for obvious reasons, must augment the difficulties of moral discipline a hundred-fold.

It may not be superfluous to state that these objections do not appertain to colleges ; for these are, or ought to be, composed of *young men*, (not of children,) whose characters may have been formed, and in a good degree, confirmed at home ; nor yet, in an equal degree, to those academies and schools which are so near that children attending them may be at home as often as once in every week or two. The great truth for which I contend, is, *that home is the natural place, the best moral nursery for children ; and that it is infinitely better to carry the school to them, than to take them to the school*. The practice of sending children away from home to school, is, beyond comparison, worse than the unnatural system of putting infants out to nurse.

I speak with earnestness and at length upon this subject, because of the great and growing tendency there is in the United States, to encourage foreign education. The Northern States calculate with as much certainty, (and provide for it almost as systematically) to manufacture *the mind* of the Southern States, as they do to manufacture their raw cotton ; and even in the East-



ern States themselves, every one who has been in the habit of noticing the advertisements in papers of a literary cast, must have observed the rapid multiplication of boarding-schools ; whilst the country adjacent to the Ohio, and to the middle portion of the Mississippi river, is becoming studded with institutions for educating the children of almost the whole south-western section of the Union.

Besides the moral evils of this practice, (which I am more immediately concerned to notice,) arising from the separation of children from their homes, and the consequent alienation of family affection, from the abstraction of boys from female society, from the substitution of juvenile for adult company, and from too free an indulgence with the use of money which is almost unavoidable ; there are one or two others, to which, as being particularly injurious to the cause of education, I beg leave hastily to refer.

*The boarding-school system operates as a serious hinderance to the spread of education.* It is universally true that those regions of country where the custom of sending children abroad to receive instruction extensively prevails, are poorly supplied with the means of education at home. This is easily accounted for. It is only the rich who can afford the expense of foreign education, and the resources of the neighbourhood are so much weakened by the loss of their co-operation and

interest, that the remainder cannot afford, or have not the spirit, to sustain a good school. It results of course, that but comparatively few enjoy the blessing of a good education.

The costliness of boarding-school instruction is another circumstance which confines its benefits to a very small portion of society. To erect and furnish a building capable of accommodating a hundred pupils would require, at the lowest calculation, the investment of twenty-thousand dollars; a sum sufficient to build forty good common school-houses at five hundred dollars each, and which would be sufficient to contain with comfort at least two thousand pupils. Again; the board, pocket-money, and travelling expenses of a hundred boys at two-hundred dollars each, would amount to twenty-thousand dollars annually, or enough, at ten dollars, which is above the average price of common school instruction in the United States, to pay for the instruction of two thousand scholars.

If the money expended in buying *bread and meat* at boarding-schools were spent in *tuition fees* at home, not only would the amount of education be increased, but what is a matter, if possible, of still greater moment, its quality would be vastly improved. The quality of education, like that of every thing else, will bear a very close relation to its price; and supposing that the cost of supporting half a dozen boys abroad were added to the

tuition fees which the rest of the neighbourhood could easily afford to pay, it is obvious that a very superior kind of education might be brought within the reach of all.

I rejoice to see this subject beginning to attract the attention of the Southern and South-western portions of our country. The contribution which they annually pay to other States for the education of *a very few* of their children, is enormous. But the loss of money is a trifling consideration, in comparison with other evils which appertain to the foreign or boarding-school system of education, not the least of which, as I have already stated, is, that by dividing the interest and the pecuniary strength of neighbourhoods, the multiplication of the means of popular instruction at home, is greatly hindered. Only let those portions of the Union to which I have alluded, heartily *unite* their efforts in support of institutions of their own, offering such salaries to teachers of every grade as would comport with the large and liberal spirit characteristic of the South; and if there be any truth in the doctrines of political economy, they cannot fail to attract to themselves instructors who will give them, *at their homes*, a kind of education equal, if not superior, to any they could find abroad.

Having expressed my reasons for believing that the means, at present relied on for forming the moral character of the children of the nation,

“are altogether inadequate,” I proceed to specify the superior recommendations which the common school system possesses, as an instrument to effect this object ; and to point out the manner in which the clergy, above any other class of men, may promote its interests, and thereby the interests of religious education.

The advantages which the common school system possesses, over those of the Sunday-school and boarding-school, are, that it may be made to embrace *all the children of the nation* ; to employ *competent teachers* for their instruction ; to repeat their lessons *with sufficient frequency* ; to conduct their education *in the immediate neighbourhood of their homes* ; and that *it does not conflict with family education*.

The illustration and proof upon these points may be very brief. The facts stated in the first and fourth, are manifest from the operation of the common school system, wherever it has been wisely established. In New-York and Massachusetts, for example, out of seven hundred thousand children, only a very few thousands are not enrolled in the common schools, which are not distant more than a mile from the doors of a very large majority.

There is no process of reasoning which can so forcibly demonstrate the superior importance of the common schools, as the simple fact, that where they are established, nineteen twentieths of our citizens begin and end their education in them ! That

is, out of the four millions of children supposed to be in the United States, three millions eight hundred thousand would be in the common schools, while only two hundred thousand would be left at boarding and private schools.

Now, just look, for a moment, at the comparative cost to the nation for education in these. Allowing eight dollars for each pupil, (which is four times as much as has been paid in New-York, until this year,) the entire cost of instructing the four millions of children would be only thirty-two millions of dollars; whilst the expense, (including board, tuition, travelling money, and *numerous extras*; and allowing two hundred dollars for each boy,) of educating only two hundred thousand at boarding-schools, would be forty millions! I leave the reflecting to make their own inferences.

In asserting that in the common schools children would receive religious as well as other instruction, at the hands of competent teachers, I take it for granted that provision shall have been made for their *professional* education, and that a critical study of the Bible shall constitute a part of this education, to which state things will certainly be brought, if the clergy will only be as active as they should be, in trying to persuade the public mind of its necessity. Now, supposing teachers of a proper character to be thus trained, it is evident that they will be able to impart a higher grade of instruction from the Bible than parents can. Here, then, is

the important point of difference between Sabbath-schools and common schools, as to the opportunities they afford for religious instruction. For the reason just given, the common school teachers will always have an advantage over parents, and will be able *to add* something to the best instruction they can give at home. Not so the Sunday-school teachers. These will always be, for the most part, young persons who cannot be as good at teaching before as after marriage, provided they continue to practise in their families. In this event, therefore, the family must be able to do more for children than Sunday-schools can, and must therefore supersede them.

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As to the manner in which the clergy may promote the interests of popular education, I remark in general that they may do so by a great variety of incidental methods, the whole of which cannot be specified. For instance, they may make it the frequent subject of their conversation, they may induce their parishoners to read about it, and furnish them at the same time, with means of information. They may occasionally supply the neighbouring press with articles upon the subject, and stimulate the editor to advocate its claims. They may do much to encourage teachers by visiting their schools, attending their examinations,

and prevailing upon the parents of the children to do so likewise ; and even from the sacred desk, they may and should, with frequency and earnestness, call the attention of their people to the nature and advantages of general education. In these and a hundred other ways which experience will best point out, they may contribute materially to the promotion of this hallowed cause. And when we reflect how many thousand clergymen there are in the United States, what might not be anticipated from a combined, harmonious effort on their part ? Acting in co-operation with other friends of education, only let them all consider themselves as responsible agents in their respective spheres, charged with enlightening the public mind as to the true nature and worth of education, with circulating the same views, guarding the people against mistakes of practice and opinion, and exciting them to a liberal provision of the means to meet the current expenses of their schools ; and ten years need not elapse before public opinion throughout the Union shall have experienced a complete and healthy revolution. Before leaving this branch of the subject, however, there are one or two expedients for influencing public opinion, which it is in the power of the clergy to employ, which in consequence of their importance I think worthy of particular notice.

*.. Might not the clergy make use of the "Tract System," with great effect for promoting the interests of education ?*

By means of tracts, the views of Rush and Cousin and Guizot and Grinké and Washington, and others on the political importance of religious education, might be made familiar to almost every family in the nation. In the same way correct views might be propagated respecting the impolicy of employing cheap teachers, the economy of liberal expenditures to procure good education, the real state and condition of education in the United States, the dignity and importance of the office of a teacher, the responsibilities of parents as to the education of their children, the part which legislation should and may perform in this great work, and many other topics that might be mentioned.

Another way in which the clergy may render essential service to the cause of education, would be by taking care *that in all the libraries of common schools there should be a suitable proportion of moral and religious books.*

If it be true that "the ballads of a people," exert a greater influence than the laws, they who prescribe the reading of the common school children, wield an instrument of incomparably greater power still. The American Sunday-school Union has taken a noble stand in this particular.

Ministers of the gospel may render a most essential service to the cause of education, *by providing for the education of pious teachers.*

This is a particular of immense importance. If we insist as strenuously as I have endeavoured to



show that it is our duty to do, upon the introduction of religious influences into schools, we should not be unmindful of the obligation which this stand imposes. It throws on us the responsibility of demonstrating the compatibility of a highly intellectual education with that which is strictly moral and religious, and that the Bible may be employed in schools without encroaching on sectarian grounds. These are points on which society can be convinced only by practical demonstration. We are therefore called upon *to act*. So long as we merely theorize upon the subject; we deserve not to be heeded, and we jeopard every thing. We owe it to our profession, to the rising generation, to our country, and to the Master whom we represent to afford a visible illustration of the benefits resulting from that union of intellectual and moral culture on which we insist. The world is tired of mere abstractions on this subject. It therefore justly calls on us for practical reasoning, in support of our views; and there is no possible way in which we can afford it, unless we first provide a supply of skilful pious teachers.

Until Christians shall do something more than merely speak and write in favour of this object, it is not reasonable to expect that politicians will even go thus far. How can we have religious education unless we have religious teachers? and who is to furnish these, if the religious portion of the community are indifferent about it? Most

gladly, therefore, would I see every denomination of Christians establishing its seminaries to supply this cardinal want. There is no one measure that is so much needed, there is none that comprehends so much, and there is nothing easier of execution, provided Christian benevolence would only include it among the objects of its benefactions. From ten to twenty thousand dollars would be sufficient to put in operation a seminary for this object, (on the agricultural plan suggested in the preceding chapter,) which might turn out annually fifty teachers.

Along with this, another object of peculiar interest might be accomplished, and to which I embrace this opportunity to call the attention of the Church. For the purpose of affording the candidates in a Normal school the requisite opportunities for practising, it is desirable that a model school should be connected with every professional school for teachers. Among the children in this school, provision might be made for admitting the children of deceased clergymen. Most of the clergy are poor, and have no hopes of leaving behind them a sum sufficient to secure the inestimable benefits of an education to their offspring in the event of their death. To be secure on this point, is their strongest earthly wish. The minister of the gospel may afford to renounce for his children as readily as for himself, the hopes of this world's goods, but accustomed to regard it

as the most invaluable blessing, without which life itself were not desirable, he cannot forego for beings dearer to him than his very soul, the prospects of a *liberal and Christian* education. If, then, professors of religion would make their pastors happy men, relieving their bosoms of their weightiest care, especially if they would spare their dying hour a pang, which all the anticipated joys of Heaven full in view, would scarce have power to alleviate, let them provide asylums to which their orphan children may repair, not to obtain a scanty allowance of food and clothing, — *this much the ordinary poor-houses of the country will secure them,* — but to be “trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” I have not room to pursue this subject; but I cannot leave it without commending it most importunately and solemnly to the consideration of the clergy, and especially of those for whose spiritual benefit they spend their lives.

The next method I shall mention by which the clergy may help forward the cause of religious education, *is to excite and aid the people of their respective congregations to understand and to discharge their duty as the moral guardians of their children.*

Only get this to be done, and there will be comparatively little left for other religious agents to accomplish. Every minister of the gospel, therefore, should look upon his congregation as a mon-

itorial school, and fathers and mothers as the monitors through whom, he, as the representative of Him who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," may instruct the lambs of his flock. I would by no means wish to see Sunday-schools discontinued whilst the religious education of children is so much neglected; but what is supremely desirable on this head, is, *that every family should become a school, every parent a teacher, and every day a Sunday.* I know not a weightier obligation resting on the clergy than that which calls upon them to do their best to give to the divinely appointed instrument for the moral culture of the young, its appropriate efficiency.

To effect this object, they must give their minds, and prayers, and efforts, expressly to the work. *They must make the subject of education a study,* that they may know how to execute the command of Him who said, "feed my lambs." Indeed, from some passages in St. Paul's Epistles, it would seem that an acquaintance with the art of education was regarded by him as one of the qualifications for the ministerial office. Is it not then worthy of being taken into consideration in the professional training of ministers? Would it be inappropriate to the duties of Professors of Pastoral Theology in our Theological Seminaries, that they should give to candidates for holy orders, practical instructions as to the manner in which they

may conduct with most effect the religious instruction of the children of their parishes?

But ministers of the gospel should not only inform themselves, they should also preach upon this subject. As they are workers together with Christ, they should not rest contented till every father and mother are workers together with them. How can they be said to declare the whole counsel of God, if they are habitually silent about this, the most comprehensive in the list of social duties? If, through their supineness, parents continue remiss in this particular, whose will be the fault? Should not, then, every pulpit, from one end of the country to the other, direct its attention and its efforts to this subject? Should not sermons be frequently preached expressly designed for children, and adapted to their comprehension? Not that I would have them separated from their parents. This would be neither necessary nor expedient. It would suffice that at an appointed time, say of a Sunday afternoon, parents and children both being present, the latter be assembled near the speaker, and be addressed as the congregation. There are no discourses more instructive to parents, than those simple, analytical, elementary statements (abounding with illustrations,) of religious truth which are suited to the young.

Should not ministers, also, incessantly proclaim in the ears of pious parents their solemn duties to their offspring; that they belong to every day; and

that they cannot be thrown off upon the hired, nor the Sunday-school teacher? There is every thing to entice, as well as to impel the clergy to this effort. It is one in which it is next to impossible they should fail of success. Can it be that Christians may be excited to give their money and their prayers for the conversion of the heathen on the other side of the globe, and that they cannot be aroused to exertion for the salvation of their own children? Parents cannot think with satisfaction of the joys of Heaven, whilst they have reason to fear lest its portals should be barred against their children. How then can we suppose that they cannot be aroused to earnest efforts for their religious education, when they are assured, (as I believe with all sincerity they may be,) that in this case, they may expect to stand before the Judgement Seat of Christ with their entire flock, and be able to say, here Lord, are we and the children whom thou hast given us? The opposite result is almost too awful to be mentioned, but it ought to be stated from the pulpit; and no minister is at liberty to assume that it is impracticable to get parents to do their duty, until he has perseveringly tried all proper measures to effect it.

But the clergy should do much more than merely tell parents of their duty; they should show them how to discharge it with reference to the details of every day. I know no objects more deserving of sympathy than those mothers (and I believe

they are very numerous) who feel their obligation, and have the desire to do something effectual for the religious education of their children, but they know not what nor how. It is cruel to harrow up the feelings of such persons by a statement of the awful consequences of parental neglect, and there to stop. A minister's duty is but just commenced when he has aroused in parents a disposition to exert themselves. Then it is that, as the head of a large monitorial school, he should go forward with his practical directions, and relieve the diffidence, and gladden the hearts of mothers, by showing them that God has not required impossibilities at their hands.

Out of a variety of expedients calculated to have this effect, I shall suggest a single one, viz: that a clergyman having prepared the way by perhaps a series of appeals to the judgements, consciences, and affections of his people, should announce that at a stated time, in every week, he will meet all parents who may feel disposed heartily to set about the religious instruction of their children: that he should at each meeting specify, with great precision, seven Bible lessons, that is, one for every day in the week, to be taught by the father or mother to the children of each family; and, *chiefly*, that he should spend an hour in explaining the difficulties in these lessons, inviting parents to ask questions and make remarks, pointing out the leading truths to be impressed upon

the minds of children ; and (what is of especial importance) throwing out such practical suggestions as may facilitate for parents the execution of their task ; such, for instance, as showing *how* this difficulty may be removed, — *how* that verse may be best explained to children, — what portions of the lesson may be passed over slightly, — and in what manner particular truths may be applied to the hearts and consciences of children with most effect.

Is it not an animating idea to think of the parents in a congregation, — certainly the mothers, (for my hopes for the religious education of the young are chiefly founded on maternal love and piety,) — assembling around their spiritual leader once a week to learn the heavenly art of *family education*, and then dispersing to impart to their respective classes, that is, to their children, on the morning or evening of each day, the lessons of piety and virtue which they have studied with the assistance of the superintendent of the congregational school ? A partial experience of the beneficial and endearing influence of such a plan, prompts me to believe that he who will try it will not speedily abandon it.

The last expedient I shall mention, by which the clergy may promote the interests of education, especially of religious education, is *the establishment of private or parochial schools on strictly Christian principles.*



While I urge the political necessity of introducing religious instruction into all our public schools, I by no means entertain the hope that it will be soon accomplished. It would be improper, therefore, for those who are persuaded of their duty in this respect, to wait until the entire country can be brought to act in concert with them. The position is, I think, a safe one, that this great improvement is not likely to be made, and made properly, in the public schools, till an example is set in private ones. Should not the clergy, then, interest themselves to furnish this example? Who will attend to it if they do not? There is no way in which so strong an influence may be exerted upon public sentiment, in favour of christianizing education, as by creating model schools, in which shall be illustrated the reciprocal advantages of uniting intellectual and moral culture.

But, apart from this consideration, do not the clergy owe it to the children of their charge, to provide that on every day of the week, as well as on Sunday, their daily wants shall be met by daily religious teaching? I am not in favour of the unnecessary multiplication of private schools, but I am so thoroughly persuaded of the vital importance of religious education, that I would make all things else subordinate and subservient to this. I would rejoice to see the clergy, of all denominations, with one voice say to the government, "give us religious education in the public schools, and

we will encourage them ; withhold it, and we shall feel bound to establish schools of our own."

If the government will make the public schools acceptable to the religious part of the community, it is much to be preferred that they should be resorted to by all. Were there no other reason for this, it is a sufficient and decisive one, that in any other way religious education must be very imperfectly diffused. In our cities and largest towns the support of parochial or denominational schools I admit is practicable ; but what is to be done when you come into the villages and the country, where the population is scattered, and where the children of the neighbourhood belong to families connected with half a dozen different Christian bodies ? It will be perceived that I here assume what in another place is expressly stated, viz : that the government can more easily introduce the Bible into schools in a way agreeable to all, than the different denominations can by agreement among themselves. Upon any amalgamating plan, the question relating to the omission of peculiarities could hardly be settled by the sects themselves ; whereas if the government were to *prescribe* a set of lessons in the Bible, it would, of course, exclude such portions as would be likely to bring denominational preferences and prejudices into collision, and this could be displeasing to but few.

There are some I am aware who conscientiously think that Christians are bound to have their chil-

dren taught at school the whole body of religious truth as they receive it, or to have nothing of religion taught. Such persons I would beg most earnestly, to reflect upon the stern alternative which is placed before us in this country, viz: that of having the religious instruction given in our schools to be truly catholic in its character, or to have none at all. Suppose we insist that it shall be Episcopal, or Presbyterian, or Unitarian, will the government or the nation assent to it in regard to the public schools? And is it not clear, from the miscellaneous and scattered character of our agricultural population, which constitutes nine-tenths of the whole, that when the strength of a neighbourhood shall have been divided some half a dozen times, there would not be enough in any fragment to support a respectable school?

Necessity is laid upon us, therefore, in constructing a system of religious instruction for our common schools, to make it the product of sectarian compromise. And what reasonable objection is there to this? Is there not in the Bible enough which is matter of common faith, out of which to frame such a system? Are not the principal religious denominations of our country agreed upon ninety-nine out of every hundred verses in the sacred volume? I know that there are some whose views are such that they could not be suited upon any grounds short of the exclusion

of religion from our schools. But such are scarcely one in a hundred to the mass of our citizens. And are the wishes of so large a majority to be overruled by so small a minority? When could a legislative measure of any sort be carried, if more were required than an *approximation* towards pleasing all concerned? It is anti-republican to maintain that a minority, however small, though it be by a single individual, should control the majority; and that legislative assembly is fortunate indeed, which in a measure of the greatest importance is able to satisfy nine-tenths of those it represents.

I have now finished enumerating the expedients by which I suppose the clergy may facilitate the establishment of a system of national education in the United States, and shall close this volume, by stating two additional considerations to those already offered, to excite them to active and untiring exertions for this object. Before I advance to these, however, I beg leave to repeat what I believe I have already stated more than once perhaps, that I offer these and other suggestions in this work with diffidence, *and yet from a sense of duty*. This volume was commenced and has been prosecuted with a practical aim. I have endeavoured to form a correct idea of *the present* condition and wants of education in our country, and to throw out views which may have about them something of practical adaptation. How far

I have succeeded has yet to be determined ; and I can only say that if the result shall prove that in any manner or degree I may have benefited the cause of education in my country, and especially the cause of *Christian education*, it will afford a pleasure which I shall carry with me into the eternal world.

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One of the considerations referred to, and one which should operate most powerfully with the clergy to induce their heartiest efforts to create a public sentiment which would place national or universal education upon a rational basis, is, that *the intellectual and moral culture of the young, when properly conducted, affords the only possible means of achieving "Christian Union."*

I will not stop to discuss the question of the expediency of Christian Union. I may safely take it for granted that all those who entertain a doubt upon this subject, attach a very different idea to these expressions from that harmony of feeling and opinion among the disciples of the Saviour, which constitute the sum and substance of that union to which I refer ; and for which, could I command it, I would plead with angelic eloquence and power.

About a union "in form," we may afford to be comparatively indifferent, (I mean so far as re-

lates to *direct* efforts to produce it,) because it will naturally and spontaneously ensue upon the creation of unity of sentiment. Any diversity of practice that can co-exist with this, will do no harm. Let us only secure that union of feeling and opinion of which I speak, and forms may be left to regulate themselves. Such an union, I not only believe to be desirable, but practicable ; and I shall endeavour to show that it can be brought about only by the instrumentality of improved education.

In prosecuting the inquiry as to the bearing which education has upon the achievement of Christian union, I remark, that a union of the various religious denominations can never be the result of compromise, nor of conventional agreement. Whilst I honour the motives of those who would by such means seek the attainment of so desirable an end, I feel constrained to believe they are pursuing an ignis fatuus. I sincerely believe, that upon such terms and in such a way, union would be wrong, even were it possible ; whilst I maintain that it would be at once admissible, safe, and most devoutly to be wished for, when it can be made to have its foundation in harmony of sentiment. Prior to a revolution of opinion which would result in this, it would not be extravagant to say that formal union among Christians is not to be desired. It would be productive of mischief instead of good ; or at the best, being based upon an unnatural foundation, it could not

last. *We cannot become united until we are agreed.* This results from the very structure of the human mind ; and external union upon any other terms, cannot fail to prove deceptive and ephemeral. It is not only impracticable, but were it otherwise, it would be improper for the different branches of the Christian family to come together upon terms which would do violence to conscience. They have no right to seek the attainment of the most desirable ends by means that are exceptionable. Conscientious scruples are not to be trifled with. The voice of conscience, when properly enlightened, is the voice of God ; and not to comply with its requirements is to disobey our Maker. Union among Christians, then, must be preceded by harmony of opinion. But as nothing is more obvious than that opinions may change ; and as a change of opinion will naturally be followed by a relinquishment of scruples, here is afforded ample room for effort after union, in a way that is as promising as unexceptionable. I exult in the belief that such is the benevolent constitution of the human mind, that *if you will teach and dispose men to think right, they naturally and almost unavoidably will think alike.* What we supremely want, then, is such an improvement in the art of education as will enable us to qualify the youth of our country for engaging aright in the pursuit of truth.

Let this once be gained ; let our children while growing up be fitted by appropriate mental discipline, for exercising the natural and unalienable right of every human being of thinking for himself ; let them from the earliest period, too, be thoroughly imbued with the sentiment that it is their interest to know the truth wherever it may be found ; let them thus prepared undertake in manhood to scrutinize the reasons for the views which they had implicitly adopted from their parents in the confiding years of childhood, and I firmly believe that diversity of opinion on all important points would soon dwindle into insignificance.

I confess I have great confidence in the inherent power of the human mind, (of every mind that is not disordered,) to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. I do not believe this to be the prerogative of genius. There are inspired as well as philosophical reasons for believing, that honesty and simplicity of purpose contribute far more to the formation of correct opinions, than talents or great learning. Much of the credit which is ordinarily given to common sense is due to these, or rather these are among the prominent constituents of common sense to whose influence its efficacy in the discovery of truth is mainly owing.

The reason that there is so much error in the world, and that it is so slowly removed, is not that truth is inaccessible to the generality of minds, but mainly *because the education we receive is not cal-*



*culated to give us due command of our reasoning powers, and because the prejudices with which we are suffered to grow up shut our eyes to the perception of truth, or cause us to avert our ears from giving to its evidence an impartial hearing.*

Both as protestants and as republicans, consistency requires that we entertain these sentiments. The genius of our government places every man upon the footing of his natural rights. Among these it not only recognises the privilege of independent thought, but puts him in a situation in which he is compelled to exercise it, or be at the mercy of others for his opinions. The fundamental principle of the reformation asserts the obligation, and of course by implication admits the ability of every human being to ascertain the truth.

Let therefore the clergy of all denominations conspire to produce that improvement in the process of education which will fit it to perform its appropriate office on the human mind; let them not rest satisfied either, until every mind and heart in the community shall have been fairly subjected to its influences, and then all that they will have occasion to do more; and all that they will have a right to do in order to bring about uniformity of religious belief, is to make a full and candid exposition of their sentiments with the reasons by which they are supported, and to leave each individual free to form his own conclusions as to their respective claims, and practically to decide in favour of that

system which, in his judgement, is best sustained by reason and by the inspired volume.

The course here recommended is in harmony with the requirements of genuine charity, no less than those of a sound philosophy, and of republican principles.

It is high time that the real nature and demands of charity were better understood. Its office is not to repress, but to further inquiry and discussion, by regulating the spirit in which they ought to be conducted. It encourages a frank and unreserved interchange of views, and a manly, courteous, unshrinking scrutiny of reasons. It never requires a sacrifice of truth nor a compromise of principle. Its existence is incompatible with the moral imbecility which would lead to this. Such weakness would be sinful ; and genuine, that is, Scriptural charity "*rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.*"

We should hold no opinions which we may be ashamed to communicate to all the world ; for if the effect of examination be to show that they are erroneous, we ought to have the magnanimity to renounce them at all hazards ; and if, for fear of this result, we persist in keeping them to ourselves, our pusillanimity only shows us to be wanting in that charity whose sole alliance is with the truth. A church, no more than an individual, will lose by being honest. It is true with reference to associations as well as persons, that "honesty is the

best policy." The success which accompanies insincerity is at best but transient, while it is incompatible with self-respect, and is often followed by repentance. There is no trait of character more distinctive of our Divine Master and his first disciples, than a magnanimous and intrepid frankness. In this respect they cannot be too closely imitated by his disciples in the present day. The Christian, like his God, should dwell in light. All about him should be clear and luminous, and easy of interpretation.

What is chiefly wanted, then, to heal the divisions in the Christian ranks, is not silence as to differences of opinion ; (this would only tend to prolong and to perpetuate divisions, and to maintain a state of armed neutrality ;) but what the Church supremely needs is, *investigation in the spirit of true charity*, — unlimited toleration as the precursor and companion of an unrestrained communication and discussion of opinions. The only possible way of arriving at a healthy and desirable uniformity of views is, by the impartial consideration of testimony by every mind, — the unfettered action of understanding upon understanding.

Let the clergy, then, address themselves to the delightful task of making the sacred right and duty of investigation, and the real office of charity, to be better understood. We should ever bear in mind, that the most important part of the intellectual task, which every one, of the present and the

coming generation will have to perform, will be to choose between conflicting opinions on religion, government, and almost every other topic ; and that it is consequently our duty, as the moral guardians of the young, to qualify them for this arduous work, by so managing their education that they shall learn to think, and be inspired with a chivalrous love of truth and justice. Let us then with united hearts and hands, conspire to produce that reform in education which alone can lead to this result. Let us have the minds of our children thoroughly impressed with the great philosophical fact, that conviction is an involuntary state of mind, and thus prepare them for endeavouring to bring others over to the truth, not by inflicting punishment, but by calm, rational, respectful, and persuasive argument. Let us have them informed how often their fathers had occasion to change their views, and how unreasonable they felt it, to be hurried or harshly treated whilst prosecuting the investigation which went before these changes, that thus they may be inclined to be patient and forbearing toward those who may follow our example. Let us teach them that our government places every individual on the basis of his native rights, among which stands pre-eminent the right of thinking ; and that although every man is responsible for his opinions, as really as for his conduct, it is not to human tribunals. Let us have them thoroughly inspired with the sentiment, that

it is equally the interest of all to know the truth; that in regard to this they sustain to each other, and to society at large, the relation of consulting physicians, not that of opposing lawyers; that it is inexpedient for any one to cherish or to propagate error; and that consequently he is a distinguished benefactor who gives us a new truth, or corrects a wrong opinion. Let us teach them to respect honest differences of opinion, and to have a proper charity for doubts, remembering that doubt is the natural state of a thinking mind prior to a clear perception of the truth, and that it is to be dissipated not by authority or force in any shape, nor yet even by persuasion, (since no man can believe as he pleases,) but solely by a frank and perspicuous statement of good reasons.

Let us, in this way, prepare the rising generation to act the part of thinking beings in the spirit of that religion which demands of every man that he shall be ready always to give his reasons for his belief, and also to act with meekness toward those who are in error; and then all else that will be requisite to bring about the great result of Christian union will be, that we bring forth our various opinions to the light, and subject them thoroughly and fairly to investigation; that we treat with kindness and forbearance all those who may leave our ranks at the bidding of conscience and their judgements, and receive with caution those who may seem to come over to our side

from partisan considerations. We are now by far too ready to welcome such, forgetting that what is true of a military is pre-eminently so of the spiritual host, that strength does not reside alone in numbers.

Nor let it be imagined that this recommendation of universal toleration is superfluous. No one can allege that the laws of toleration are yet perfectly comprehended in this country ; or, that being understood, there is no room for improvement in obeying them. If any one suppose that perfect freedom of conscience and opinion are enjoyed among us, the trial of a very simple experiment would tend to undeceive him. Let him, if conscience do not forbid, attempt a change of ecclesiastical connexion, in a neighbourhood where considerable rivalry has existed between the church he leaves and the one he joins ; and however upright he may be in his intentions,—however mild, and frank, and courteous, in the statement of his reasons,—he will assuredly suffer for it in some way or other. If a merchant or a mechanic, his business will be curtailed ; if a physician or a lawyer, his practice will be temporarily impaired ; and if he sustain no business relation to society, he will be punished in a way most painful to a person of proper sensibility, viz : by coldness of behaviour,—by the abstraction of good will,—by the interruption of social cordiality,—by misinterpretation of his motives,—and he may even think

himself fortunate to escape positive misrepresentation and abuse. Now, such things ought not so to be ; and I mention them thus plainly, because they constitute one of the most effectual impediments to union. They are utterly at variance with the requirements of Christian charity: they present as real a case of persecution as any that darkens the page of ecclesiastical history: they manifest the same spirit, differing only in degree, with that which fastened its victims upon spikes, or committed them to the flames. There is no other common ground on which all may meet,—there is no other principle, having the sanction of the golden rule, but that every individual be left as free to change, as originally to choose his church connexion ; and that he be able to exercise this privilege without a tongue being moved, or a finger raised, to inflict the slightest wound upon him for so doing. Our only security against the evils apprehended from an unrestricted extension of this license, lies in qualifying all by appropriate education for its safe and judicious exercise.

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The only remaining consideration I have to offer, to induce the clergy to lend their hearty exertions to advance the interests of common school education, is, *that it is a duty which they owe their country.*

Aside from our religious obligations, our fellow-citizens have a claim upon our active efforts to promote the cause of popular instruction. They support our families for the express purpose that we may be able to give our undivided attention to whatever relates directly or indirectly, to the moral and religious interests of society. Let us show them that we are not ungrateful for their kindness, nor unmindful of our political, any more than of our spiritual obligations. Let us make it manifest that genuine patriotism and religion are not incompatible ; that the charity which embraces in its range the entire family of man, does not forbid an especial regard for those who are most nearly related to us. Let us prove, by our conduct, that we love our country ; that we sympathize with our fellow-citizens in their hopes and fears, respecting our national prospects ; and that we are willing to spend, and be spent, for the promotion of the common good.

There never was proposed a more momentous question than that which must, ere long, receive a practical answer from the issue of the experiment which is in progress in this country, viz : *Is a people, under any circumstances, capable of self-government?* To this we must reply, they are, *if properly educated*, but not otherwise. It is therefore a perfectly synonymous question, can the people be universally, or even generally educated ? Tyrants say not ; and from this assumption they



draw the rational inference, that they are incapable of governing themselves, and therefore out of mere parental kindness they undertake, "by the grace of God," to manage for them ! Grant their premise, and their conclusion is unavoidable. But such reasoning would drive us to demolish our school-houses,—to silence our presses,—to make a bonfire of our Bibles,—and to recommit conscience to the keeping of men of like passions and frailties with ourselves. Alluding, as they generally do, when uttering such sentiments, to their own degraded subjects, they unquestionably speak the truth. That the body of the Spanish and Italian peasantry, for instance, are incapable of self-government, I grant without a moment's hesitation ; but their rulers take good care to forget that the ignorance and servility which constitute the disqualification are of their own creating. Their conduct, therefore, in pronouncing them incapable of self-direction, under such circumstances, is just about as plausible as would be that of an arbitrary monarch, who should first bind and imprison a wealthy subject, and then declaring him incompetent to manage for himself, should appropriate his goods, under the pretext of receiving pay for friendly services rendered in taking care of him.

It must not be supposed, however, that I would rank with the enemies of human freedom, all those who may entertain doubts of the immediate practicability of republican institutions. It cannot be

disguised, that many of our best and wisest citizens entertain such fears, and their number seems to be increasing. But I cannot share their apprehensions. Their forebodings I must consider premature. The crisis of our nation is but just commencing, and the transforming power of education has never yet been fairly brought to bear upon the people. In it, when rightly administered, I fondly trust there will be found an amulet to secure us against all dreaded evils. I firmly believe that it will prove an ample, as it is the only panacea for our social ills. I confess I have unbounded confidence in its salutary operations.

But whatever decision shall be given to this question, either by reasoning or experiment, our present situation and policy as a nation are as plain as day. We are now, and at least for a considerable time to come we must continue to be, a self-governing people, and should make our moral provisions accordingly. Even upon the supposition that an immediate change were desirable, it is utterly impracticable; for no matter what the motives by which he may be actuated, woe be to the man who shall attempt to introduce among us the mildest form of arbitrary government; to place upon our national banner the "Dei Gratia" of despots, in room of the "E Pluribus Unum" of our republican brotherhood. Education, then, properly so called, is the hope of our republic, the only safeguard of our institutions

and our liberties. I have confidence in it, that it can make our artists and farmers skilful, and thereby be promotive of national prosperity ; that its tendency will be to make us a virtuous, and consequently a happy people ; that it will qualify our citizens for the enactment of good laws, and inspire them with a disposition to obey them ; that it will divest them of religious bigotry, superstition, and fanaticism, in all their forms ; that it will beget a regard for personal reputation and public opinion, which shall be equivalent to law ; and that it will indemnify us against the arts of demagogues, those worst foes of good government, by ultimately putting a stop to unprincipled electioneering : for only give a man sound principles and knowledge ; accustom him to think for himself ; let him have opinions of his own, respecting the relative merit of questions and of men ; let him thus become possessed of self-confidence and self-respect ; and it will be quite a delicate matter even to ask him for his vote ; much less will he be elated and duped by those coarse and hypocritical attentions which, by a man of any intelligence and character, must be looked upon as the grossest insult.

Our best interests, as well as safety, therefore, impel us to aim at the universal diffusion of knowledge among the people. We are urged to it by no weaker motive than the instinctive principle of self-preservation ; for the very moment we acquire a permanent indifference to public education and

popular improvement in all its forms, that moment we are guilty of political suicide. As a nation we have embarked in the novel and perilous enterprise of attempting to govern ourselves. The eyes of the civilized world are upon us. The friends and enemies of human liberty are anxiously waiting, though with opposite wishes, the issue of the experiment. Let us then exert ourselves to impress it on the minds and hearts of our countrymen, that with a wise and virtuous population, all is safe ; but that disgrace, defeat, and national shipwreck, must inevitably ensue upon the prevalence of ignorance and vice.

There is something most intensely interesting about the moral attitude of our country at the present time. She seems, without intending it, to have brought herself under a stern necessity,—the necessity of uncontrollable circumstances,—to carry education to the highest state, both of diffusion and improvement, of which it is susceptible. The Church and the State in America have become exposed to a common danger, and there is before them only one and the same refuge. The rapid strides of an unreflecting democratic feeling have hurried both into a perilous situation, from which they will find themselves obliged to look for safety to education,—superior, rational, religious, universal education,—not the partial education of the head, or heart, or body, but of the entire being,—a simultaneous and harmonious

cultivation of all the powers God has given us. God in wisdom, and I trust in benevolence to us and to the rest of mankind, has suffered us to rush without reflection into a condition which requires us to become not only almost, but emphatically a Christian people ; in which the only alternative placed before us is to make ourselves pre-eminently intelligent and virtuous, or to perish. We are thus subjected to the influence of the same powerful stimulant, which urges the intemperate to reform, when told by their physician that they must moderate the indulgence of their appetites, or quickly kill themselves.

In Great Britain, and on the European continent, where things are more or less in that transition state, through which the entire world seems destined to pass, the change from arbitrary rule to free government,—from a monopoly of privileges to a practical recognition of the natural rights of man,—goes on gradually and tardily. Among the most zealous advocates of reform, there are many who are aware of the danger of precipitancy, and of the wisdom of proceeding slowly. *They* have taken warning from the desperate experiment of the French, which came too late *for us*. Prior to its occurrence we had passed the Rubicon. The French revolution now operates (and who knows but it was intended for this purpose,) as a providential beacon, to inspire innovators with caution, and to teach them the necessity

of prudence and deliberation, in bringing about political changes. Such a restraint was needed by Europeans, because the distance they had to travel was greater than with us. They were not so well prepared for making a political bound as we. The moral position which we attained by *revolution*, they must gain by a gradual process of *reform*. Any other attempt must certainly result in a repetition of the Gallic tragedy. Had we, as a people, been similarly apprized of the danger of rapid innovation, we too might have been afraid to take the steps we have taken, and thus the world have been denied the benefit of our example. In the years immediately preceding '76, no one dreamed of a separation from the mother country. A redress of grievances, — a lightening of our political burdens, sought by ordinary means, — was all that was contemplated. The idea of revolution was the involuntary suggestion of circumstances. National independence was not sought, but forced upon us by the obstinate infatuation of the British government. They dreamed as little of the consequences of our difference, when in its incipient stage, as we.

The finger of God was evidently in this transaction. There is no event in the history of any people that exhibits a more manifest providence. The emancipation of this country was in its inception an event with which human volition or design had nothing at all to do. It originated in the ju-

ditional blindness of the parent government and was achieved by our fathers under the pressure of a stern necessity. Ours is a position, however, which for the moral and political regeneration of the world, it was requisite some portion of the human family should take. The separation of the Jewish nation from the rest of mankind was not more necessary for the preservation of the knowledge and worship of the true God. In the latter case, a world was to be redeemed from idolatry ; in the former, from political misrule. An example was needed — pioneers were wanting — and God, I fondly hope, has selected the American people, like Israel of old, to be the harbingers of mercy to the race of man. Could the posterity of Jacob, when enslaved in Egypt, have foreseen the immediate consequences of their emancipation, — could they have anticipated the trials incident to their transition state, the forty years of sojourn in the wilderness, their numerous conflicts with gigantic foes, their sufferings from hunger and from thirst, together with the destruction of their entire adult host, they might not have been prevailed upon to forsake the country of their servitude. But their eyes were fastened on the land of promise. Their attention was at first directed only to the glorious issue, and they thought not of the toil and privations through which it was to be reached, until it was too late for them to retrace their steps.

And thus it was, with a striking similarity, in the case of the American people. Goaded to desperation by their oppressors, they adopted the bold resolve of separating from the mother country. The notion of independence once embraced, they became intoxicated with the idea of liberty,—an intoxication from which we have scarcely yet recovered,—and thenceforth all thought of consequences immediate or remote was banished, and they looked only to the glory and the happiness which would ensue upon a successful termination of their struggle.

The result has been an organization of society in the United States, precisely such as seems most favourable to a manifestation of the true nature and power of the Christian religion, whilst the Christian religion is just that moral system whose aid and guidance American institutions need, and must secure, to make them practicable. Our democratic zeal has precipitated us into a condition, in which we are likely to find the maintenance of government impossible, without the restraining and renovating agency of Christian education. In our eager chase of political reform, there has been a letting loose of power, which requires the principles of the Gospel to control it. Society has been dissected, and its component parts set free to take what course each pleases. In monarchical governments, the number of wills to be regulated is small; there is little individuality of character;



and most men have no moral being aside from the mass of which they constitute a part. But under our republican forms of government, every man is recognised as a free agent ; and now a species of education is required, which shall have power to make those who are left free to do as they please, choose to do as they ought. Without such a power, we shall be compelled to retrace our steps through seas of blood to a more arbitrary form of government. But, thanks to a paternal Providence, such a power does exist, and is to be found in a controlling union of the Christian religion with all our schemes of popular instruction. My brethren ! let us see to it that this power be applied.

The course which is pursued by our politicians to avert the dangers that now threaten us, is in itself calculated to increase the necessity, and to ensure the adoption, of principles of education which shall carry with them something more than human energy. The means of relief to which they commonly resort, only tend to hasten the catastrophe they would prevent. They pursue a temporizing policy which, reaching as it does, only to the surface of our difficulties, accomplishes but little for the present, and fills the future with ill omens. There is an alarming tendency in our rulers, to seek relief in remedies which are both inadequate and inappropriate. They seem to overlook entirely what every thing proclaims, that the evils under which we groan at present, and

the still greater ones that threaten us, are moral evils, and that moral evils require moral remedies.

The country is supposed to be in danger from the controlling influence exerted by a reckless, selfish, and unprincipled party spirit in determining our presidential and other elections. What is to be done? "Mend the constitutions!"—exclaim many of our leading politicians. But what will this avail if they do not at the same time mend the people?

The whole commercial world is thrown into convulsions, as some imagine, by the mistaken policy of our government. What remedy is proposed? "Fly to the polls!"—"Effect a change of rulers!"—is the general cry. And when brought to the polls what are the expedients resorted to to decide the people's choice? The coffee-houses are thrown open! Administration and anti-administration grog-shops are established! And worse than all, bribery, aye, the corrupt and corrupting use of money is resorted to! at first, secretly, it is true;—but there is too much reason to fear, that gathering boldness from success, and hardihood from indulgence, it will be at length employed openly, and with unblushing, undisguised effrontery!

And what is the pretext, what the apology for such a course? "Self-defence!" is the mutual reply,—“The opposing party employ the money of the public treasury to determine the elections;

and improper as we think it, we are compelled to use our own funds for this purpose or be beaten !” That is, the one side are suspected of committing a grievous evil — grievous in the sight of God as it should be in the sight of man — and, forsooth, because they *are supposed* to have sinned *officially* ; the others justify themselves thereby for committing *the very same sin unofficially* !

I am not concerned to determine the degree of justice one way or the other, with which the crimination and recrimination of our conflicting political parties in relation to this matter are made. It is quite enough to justify the heartiest remonstrance from the lips and pen of every moralist to know, and this I do know from personal observation, that such iniquity is ever practised. This being the case, it becomes the duty of every virtuous member of society — of every patriot, and especially of every minister of the gospel, for his country’s sake no less than for religion’s sake, to speak out plainly in the language of rebuke, and particularly to demonstrate the impolicy of a practice in which, unhappily, some of our most patriotic citizens have been, imperceptibly and in opposition to their own principles and wishes, led to participate. That such measures are impolitic, is plain as day. To resort to whisky and to bribery to control elections is to resort to desperate remedies. It is far worse than repairing to the bottle when one’s fortune is in jeopardy. It is true, apparent

good may be in some cases, the immediate result ; but it is good too dearly bought. By such a course an irreparable injury is done the national character. A wound is inflicted on the public morals, and there is too much reason to fear it is in most cases an immedicable one. From that citizen who will barter his judgement or his conscience for a bribe, little can be hoped. His bosom thenceforth is a stranger to all nobler motives.

Beside, it should never be forgotten, that the man who, this year for a pint of whisky, votes to support the constitution, may next year for a quart vote to overthrow it. To rely on such expedients, is worse than to depend upon the pumps, and on throwing the cargo overboard, to save a vessel from destruction, while the water is suffered to pour in through an unstopped breach. It is too much like sowing up the lips of a putrid abscess, and thereby sending the diseased contents to prey internally upon the vitals. Nothing can have the effect of divesting elections of unfairness and of making a dependence upon the vote of the people safe, but virtuous education. A permanent removal or even a mitigation of the evil of corrupt electioneering, cannot be effected in any other way than by fastening on the moral sense of the community through the agency of religious education, the stern impression that their motives and their conduct at the polls will form a part of the disclosures at the day of judgement.

Other instances might be adduced to prove that our legislators, for the most part, overlook the necessity of employing the transforming efficacy of moral causes, for the removal of the moral evils under which society is suffering. I might refer, for example, to most of the recent legislation, having for its object the protection of human life against the carelessness of some, the lawless violence of others, and the influence of certain fashionable principles in others still. These are evils which can never be eradicated, nor perhaps greatly moderated, by any power legislation can exert. All that our legislative bodies can do, in the way of preventing these, is to impose penalties; but these, if mild, will not be heeded, and if severe cannot be enforced.

But thanks to Him, the economy of whose providence is always to be "educing good from ill," the effects of this mistaken policy are such as must accelerate its overthrow, and bring honour to the Christian religion, by demonstrating the necessity of a restraining, and what is better, a reforming influence, which can be found no where else than in the application of its principles to the education of the youth of our country. The present defective course of our rulers, if persisted in much longer, cannot fail to make things go from bad to worse, until society shall be brought to the eve of dissolution, and all the advocates of law and order, and of constitutional government, shall be obliged

to throw themselves into the Christian ranks, and make common cause in hastening the reign of religious principles in our schools, and by their means, throughout the length and breadth of our country. Such, I fondly trust, is to be the glorious result. Of its approach, I think, we may discern, in the noble stand taken by the legislature of New-York when viewed in connexion with the circumstances which gave rise to it, a harbinger and pledge.

It is because of considerations such as these, that the Christian philosopher can survey the existing crisis of his country with composure and with hope. Where all is dark to others, a pleasing prospect opens to his view. With the telescope of faith, he descries in the distance, beyond the reach of ordinary sight, benevolent intention, brighter light, and better days. By his discerning vision the rainbow of mercy is seen to span the cloud, which to the sight of others only menaces destruction. Though black and threatening in its appearance, by him it is regarded as the pillar of cloud, designed to guide a mighty nation in its journey through a probationary wilderness. National misfortunes are looked upon by him as blessings in disguise. Commercial embarrassment, the wreck of fortunes, the prevalent distress, he regards as so many fatherly chastisements, intended to shield us against the dangers of a too prosperous condition; chastisements, which, though for the present griev-

ous, may yet work out for us the peaceable and saving fruits of national righteousness. The reckless selfishness of party spirit, the ruthless perpetrations of popular lawlessness, he looks upon as so many admonitions from a paternal providence, giving us self-knowledge with a view to humble us, and revealing to us our true condition, that he rid us of that fatal self-complacency by which we have been hoodwinked as to the dangers that encircle us.

By this, then, as the last consideration I would offer, — *by their love of country*, — I would call upon my clerical brethren to address themselves with zeal and concert, to create a public sentiment in the United States, which shall be favourable to placing *national education on a religious basis*. Our country is in danger; and from a view of the licentiousness of the populace on the one hand, and the selfishness of many who seek and hold office, on the other, it were difficult to tell whether she is most in danger from popular ignorance, or unsanctified intelligence. One thing, however, is perfectly clear, that her only possible safety is to be found in **UNIVERSAL EDUCATION, UPON CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES!**

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#### CONCLUSION.

I WOULD close this volume with an importunate appeal to Ministers of the Gospel throughout the Union.

BRETHREN IN THE SACRED MINISTRY! — Suffer me to propose to you a question or two with reference to the all-important subject of which I have been treating. But before I state them, I would most earnestly request, (and I affect not one particle of solemnity which I do not feel, in doing so,) that you would give them a consideration in those solemn moments, when oppressed with a sense of your official responsibility, you repair to a throne of grace for light, and guidance, and support, and with the honest question on your lips, — “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”

I ask, then, have I made an exaggerated statement of the “POLITICAL NECESSITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION?” Is it a correct view which has been taken of the will of God that every human being on whom he has bestowed the germ of intellectual and moral susceptibility shall receive an education — of the right of every child to claim it — of the obligation of parents to bestow it — and on their default, of the duty of society, as their sponsor, to discharge the debt? Have I overestimated the magnitude of the evils which result from a separation of intellectual and moral education, and of the religious as well as political necessity of reuniting them? Is it true that popular morality can have no other than a religious basis? Have I claimed too much for the inspired volume, in asserting that it is the sole authority and guide which it is right and safe to follow in forming the character of the children of the na-



tion? Does it, or does it not, sustain to governments no less than to private persons, the commanding relation I have supposed? Is it true that the FAMILY, the divinely constituted engine for effecting the religious education of the young, does so little to promote it? and that parents who are primarily charged with this most important of all human duties, are so sadly remiss in their attention to it? Have I rightly stated the controlling relation which public sentiment sustains in a republican government, to education as well as every other interest, and of the sluggishness and impotence of legislation when not impelled, or not sustained by its co-operation? Is it true that the means on which we have hitherto relied, for the moral education of *the entire* youth of our country, have proved inadequate — that the common school-house is the only platform on which all the children of the nation ever meet, and that there exists no other practicable mode of getting at the mind and heart *of every child*, with a view to achieve its moral and religious education, than that of sending among them on this theatre, *pious, professionally educated* teachers, with the Bible in their hands? Have I correctly represented the inducements and the obligations of the clergy, to exert themselves to create a wholesome public sentiment throughout the land in relation to this all-important subject? And, lastly, let us one and all inquire at the bar of conscience, — ARE WE

DOING OUR DUTY? What have we done for the multiplication and improvement of those nurseries, in which three millions eight hundred thousand, of the four millions of children in our country are to receive all the education which they will ever get? *Have we ever prayed for common schools?* Have we ever preached about them? Have we ever written an article for the religious or the political press in their behalf? Do we make them the frequent subject of our conversation?

Whatever may be our conduct now in relation to this matter, a day is coming when we shall be called upon to reply to these inquiries, and by an authority which will not allow us to evade an answer. May God, in mercy to his Church and our country, grant that we may now prepare a *practical* reply of which we need not be ashamed when we stand at his tribunal.

To this end, let us be up and doing, and by our future zeal atone, in some measure, for our past remissness in relation to this all-important subject. There is every thing to encourage us to put forth prompt and active efforts in this cause. The public mind is peculiarly excitable just now in relation to the interests of popular instruction. It is a most auspicious circumstance, that a speaker of respectability may, almost at an hour's warning and in any part of the Union, assemble an audience to hear an address on education. If we preach upon

the subject, therefore, the people will come to hear us ; if we print, they will as certainly read ; and if we make it a topic of conversation, they will not fail to listen to us.

And let us not delay the discharge of this important duty. There are many things that conspire to direct our attention to the admonition, "what thou doest do quickly." I will mention but a single circumstance. There are abundant indications that the control of education, which the clergy have wielded for hundreds of years past, will, in a short time, be transferred to other hands. In every State in the Union it is about to be assumed, as it should be, by the government. It is a very serious fact, that whilst under our control we permitted its only religious feature to be removed, by submitting too quietly, it is to be feared, to the banishment of the Bible from the schools. We have yet an opportunity to repair, in some degree, the evils which ensued upon this act, but let us bear in mind it is an opportunity that cannot be enjoyed long.

The country is calling aloud from every quarter for professionally educated teachers. Every one must be impressed with the importance of having pious men as the instructors of our youth. Whether our schools shall be supplied with such depends, for obvious reasons, upon Christians, and on Christian ministers. There is every reason to believe that the establishment of institutions for this purpose by the church, on Christian principles, would give

general satisfaction throughout the country ; but it is quite as certain, that if *she* do not take measures to provide such *soon*, the *government* will be required to establish them, when of course so strict a regard will not be paid to the character of the candidates admitted. The question then presents itself to us with the most intense and pressing interest, *shall we not add the education of common school teachers to the list of objects which already command the attention of Christian benevolence in our country ?*

Will it be said by any that this list is already sufficiently formidable ? that it imposes as heavy a tax upon the church as she is well able to bear ? If this be the only difficulty, go, I would say to such an objector, and study the exhaustless resources of that benevolence which has undertaken and has thus far prosecuted, not the improvement of a nation, but the renovation of a world !—go to the foreign missionary, and ask him what he thinks of the amplitude of that fund, on the faith of which he has attacked the inveterate superstitions of six hundred millions of heathens !—go to the first disciples of our Saviour and ask them their impression of the range and the dimensions of that love which caused the Son of God to undertake the reformation of our race, although so poor as not to be able to pay a trivial tax without the performance of a miracle, and which sent them forth without either scrip or purse, to propagate his principles. They will tell you of a charity that “never

faileth," and which embraces in its benefactions every object which either immediately or remotely tends to spread the kingdom of their master. They will tell you that to the fund of heaven-born charity there belongs a fulness which precludes insolvency, increasing as it is drawn, accumulating by expenditure — that in its nature it is elastic, expansive, diffusive ; not as the undulating pendulum, always retracing the same beaten segment ; but like the radii of a circle, whose centre is the heart, and their circumference the universe.

May we not, then, call on every Christian denomination in our country for an additional ten or twenty thousand dollars for establishing under the control of each, a nursery for pious school-masters ? The history of our religious charities encourages the belief, that if the comprehensive religious bearings of this measure were fully stated, a favourable response to such an application would be received. The nature of Christian obligation and of parental love forbids the indulgence of any other idea. Let us suppose for a moment that a course of religious instruction had been fairly established in our schools ; and that a pious teacher had been placed at the head of each, in whom religious parents found a wise and efficient auxiliary in training up their children with virtuous sentiments and habits. Let us next suppose that a formal proposition were made by the government to banish the Bible from the school-house, and to displace the pious teacher to make

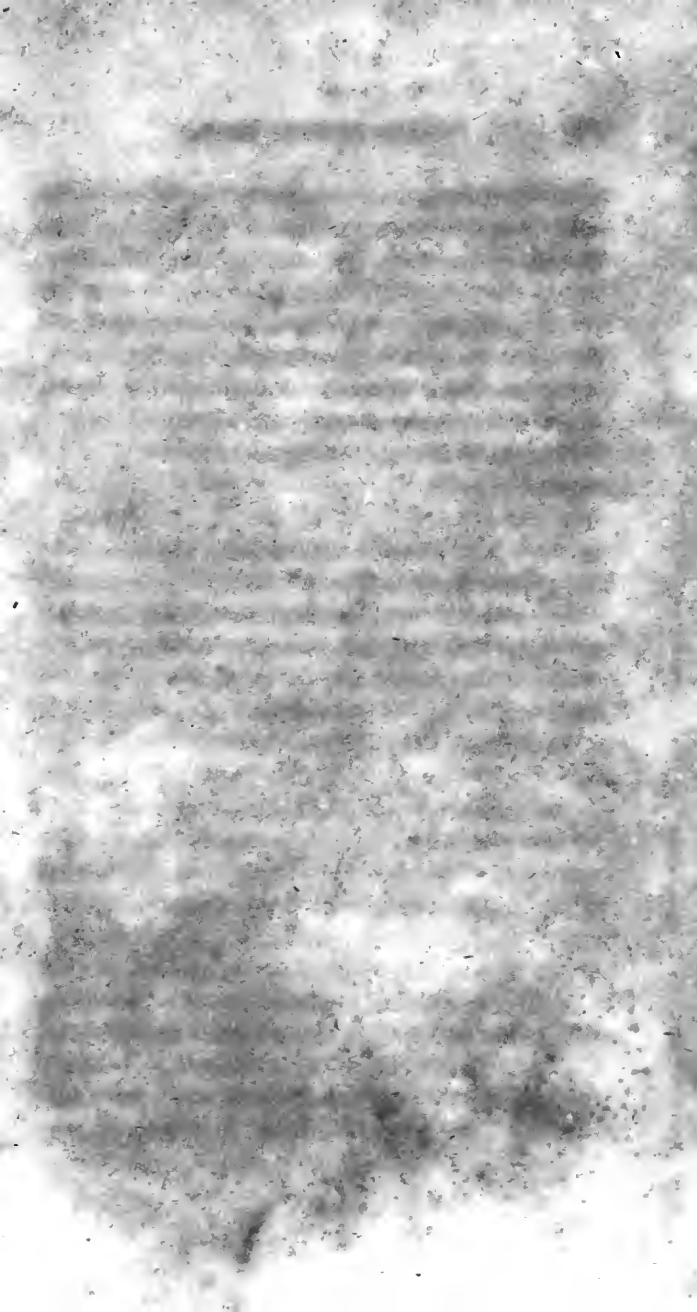
room for one who, if not immoral, was not religious in his character; in other words, to put things on the footing which they occupy at present: how would such a movement be regarded by the Christian community? Would they stop their ears, and close their eyes, and shut their mouths, and fold their arms with satisfied indifference? On the contrary, would not the entire country be thrown into commotion by such a proposition? Would not the pillow of the pious mother be bathed in tears? Would not fathers assemble in solemn council to deliberate about appropriate methods of resistance? Would not protest upon protest urge their way to our legislative chambers, until the secretary's table should groan beneath their load? Would not the pulpit and the press become vocal with remonstrance? And would not the throne of grace be almost wearied with the supplications of anxious parents praying for the prevention of so awful a calamity?

But what is the difference as to the effects, between the introduction and the *perpetuation* of this state of things? We have not the shadow of a pretext for inaction on the ground of the impracticability of arousing the religious part of the community to a proper sense of the importance of this subject. May our future conduct then prove that we have been duly mindful of the inspired admonition, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."











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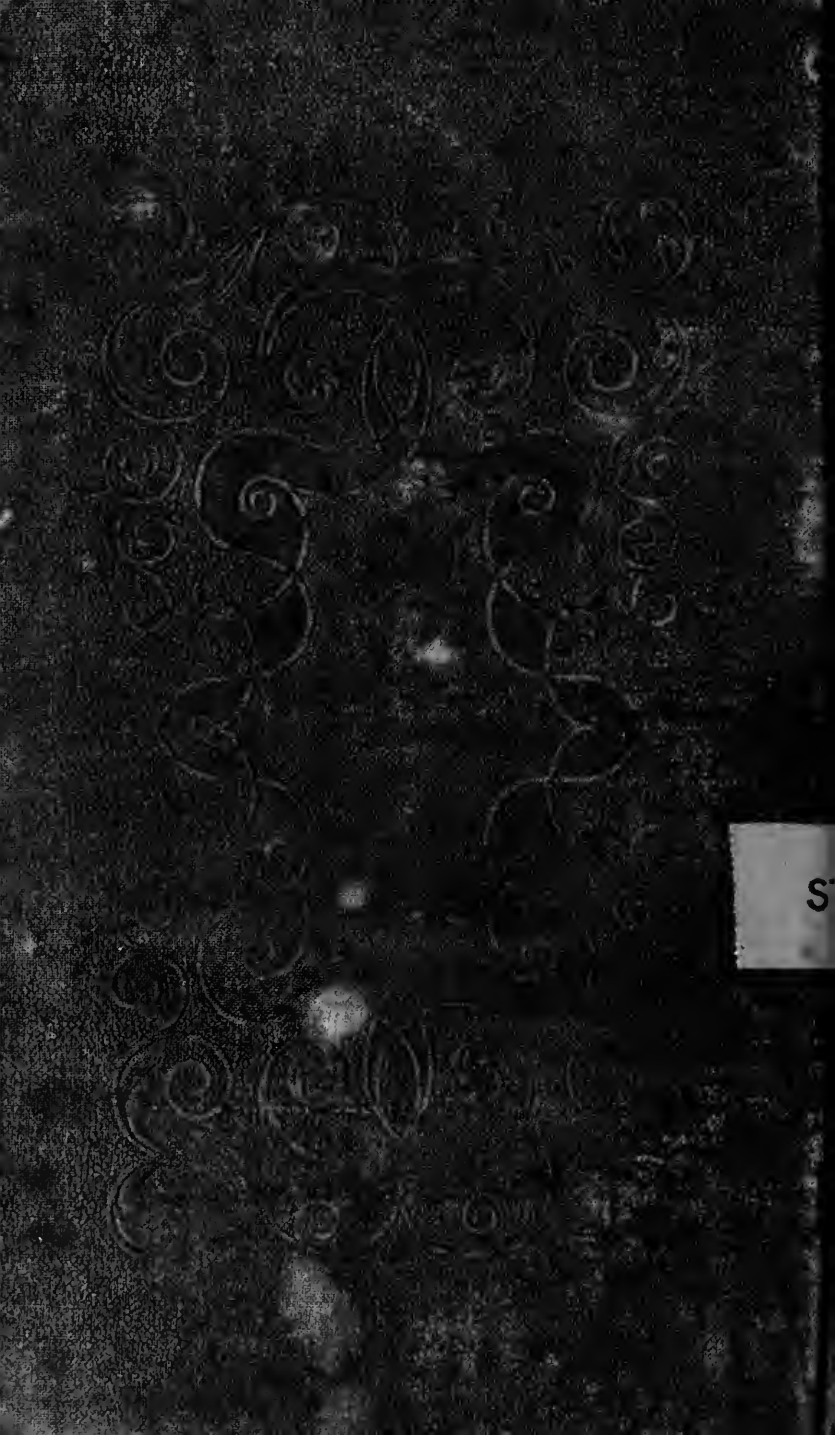


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